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THE  
HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

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THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

*SECOND EDITION.*

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IN the present Edition of this Work, a few passages, which appear to have been misapprehended, have been more fully developed; and a few notes subjoined, either explanatory, or containing further information on some interesting points of enquiry.

Among the writers, whose opinions the Author has cited in the Preface to the Third Volume, as similar to his own, the great name of Paley has been omitted. The chapter in his popular and generally received work, "The Evidences of Christianity," (part iii. ch. 3,) on the connexion of Christianity with the Jewish History, is worthy the attention of all who exercise their reason on such subjects.





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## BOOK I.

### THE PATRIARCHAL AGE.

*Prefatory Remarks—Life of Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—  
Progress of Civilization—Observations on the  
Patriarchal History.*





THE Jews, without reference to their religious belief, are among the most remarkable people in the annals of mankind. Sprung from one stock, they pass the infancy of their nation in a state of servitude in a foreign country, where, nevertheless, they increase so rapidly, as to appear on a sudden the fierce and irresistible conquerors of their native valleys in Palestine. There they settle down under a form of government and code of laws totally unlike those of any other rude or civilised community. They sustain a long and doubtful conflict, sometimes enslaved, sometimes victorious, with the neighbouring tribes. At length, united under one monarchy, they gradually rise to the rank of a powerful, opulent, and commercial people. Subsequently, weakened by internal discord, they are overwhelmed by the vast monarchies which arose on the banks of the Euphrates, and transplanted into a foreign region. They are partially restored, by the generosity or policy of the Eastern sovereigns, to their native land. They are engaged in wars of the most romantic gallantry in assertion of their independence, against the Syro-Grecian successors of Alexander. Under Herod, they rise to a second era of splendour, as a dependent kingdom of Rome: finally, they make the last desperate resistance to the universal dominion of the Cæsars. Scattered from that period over the face of the earth—hated, scorned, and oppressed,

they subsist, a numerous and often a thriving people ; and in all the changes of manners and opinions retain their ancient institutions, their national character, and their indelible hope of restoration to grandeur and happiness in their native land. Thus the history of this, perhaps the only unmingled, race, which can boast of high antiquity, leads us through every gradation of society, and brings us into contact with almost every nation which commands our interest in the ancient world ; the migratory pastoral population of Asia ; Egypt, the mysterious parent of arts, science, and legislation ; the Arabian Desert ; the Hebrew theocracy under the form of a federative agricultural republic ; their kingdom powerful in war and splendid in peace ; Babylon, in its magnificence and downfall ; Grecian arts and luxury endeavouring to force an unnatural refinement within the pale of the rigid Mosaic institutions ; Roman arms waging an exterminating war with the independence even of the smallest states ; it descends, at length, to all the changes in the social state of the modern European and Asiatic nations.

The religious history of this people is no less singular. In the narrow slip of land inhabited by their tribes the worship of one Almighty Creator of the Universe subsists, as in its only sanctuary. In every stage of society, under the pastoral tent of Abraham, and in the sumptuous temple of Solomon, the same creed maintains its inviolable simplicity. During their long intercourse with foreign nations in Egypt and Babylon, though the primitive habits and character of the Hebrew nation were greatly modified, and perhaps some theological

notions engrafted on their original tenets, this primary distinction still remains ; after several periods of almost total apostacy, it revives in all its vigour. Nor is this merely a sublime speculative tenet, it is the basis of their civil constitution, and of their national character. As there is but one Almighty God, so there is but one people under his especial protection, the descendants of Abraham. Hence their civil and religious history are inseparable. The God of the chosen people is their temporal as well as spiritual sovereign ; he is not merely their legislator, but also the administrator of their laws. Their land is his gift, held from him, as from a feudal liege-lord, on certain conditions. He is their leader in war, their counsellor in peace. Their happiness or adversity, national as well as individual, depends solely and immediately on their maintenance or neglect of the divine institutions. Such was the common popular religion of the Jews, as it appears in all their records, in their law, their history, their poetry, and their moral philosophy. Hence, to the mere speculative inquirer, the study of the human race presents no phenomenon so singular as the character of this extraordinary people ; to the Christian, no chapter in the history of mankind can be more instructive or important, than that which contains the rise, progress, and downfall of his religious ancestors.

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, holds an eminent place in all oriental tradition, not only among the Jews, but likewise among the Persians, Arabians, and perhaps the Indians. It is difficult to say how far these legends may have been propagated by the Mahometan conquests, for our

knowledge of the history and literature of Eastern nations, anterior to the Hegira, is still limited and unsatisfactory. The Arabian accounts of Abraham, adopted into the Koran, are no doubt much older than Mahomet; but whether they were primitive traditions, or embellishments of their authentic history, originating among the Jews themselves, is a question perhaps impossible to decide. The simplicity of the narrative in the Book of Genesis affords a remarkable contrast to the lofty pretensions which the patriarch assumes in these legends, as the teacher not merely of religious truth, but of science, arithmetic, mathematics, and astronomy, to the Egyptians. Abram was the son of Terah, the head of a pastoral family, consisting of three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran, probably the eldest, died early, leaving a son named Lot; Abram was married to Sarah, daughter of Terah by another wife; Nahor married Milcah, a daughter of Haran. Their native place was Ur, a district to the north-east of that region, which lies above the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, and became afterwards the seat of the great Babylonian monarchy. About Ur the country is open, dry, and barren, well suited for pasture, but not for tillage. In the spacious and level plains of Chaldea, where the nights are delightfully cool and serene, a pastoral people would naturally be led to contemplate the heavenly bodies with peculiar attention. To this country the first rudiments of astronomy are generally ascribed, and here the earliest form of idolatry, the worship of the host of heaven, usually called Tsabaism, began to spread. The Arabian tradi-

tions suppose that a farther step had been already taken, and represent Terah, the father of Abram, as a maker of images, called from his name Tera-  
 phim. Other legends attribute to this period the origin of fire-worship. But whatever the system or systems of religion, in whatever manner he acquired his purer notions of the Deity, Abram stood alone in a tribe and family of idolaters, as the worshipper of the one great Creator.\* According to the usage of nomadic tribes, the family of Terah broke up from their settlement at Ur, and migrated to Carrhan, a flat barren region lying west of Ur, and celebrated in later history for the defeat of Marcus Crassus, near Carrhæ. After a residence of some years in Carrhan, the pastoral horde divided, and Abram set forth to establish an independent tribe in a remote region. Lot, the son of his brother Haran, followed his fortunes. Nahor remained with Terah his father, the here-

\* The most pleasing of the traditionary fictions is the following:—"As Abraham was walking by night from the grotto where he was born, to the city of Babylon, he gazed on the stars of heaven, and among them on the beautiful planet Venus. 'Behold,' said he within himself, 'the God and Lord of the Universe!' but the star set and disappeared, and Abraham felt that the Lord of the Universe could not thus be liable to change. Shortly after he beheld the moon at the full: 'Lo,' he cried, 'the Divine Creator, the manifest Deity!' but the moon sank below the horizon, and Abraham made the same reflection as at the setting of the evening star. All the rest of the night he passed in profound rumination; at sunrise he stood before the gates of Babylon, and saw the whole people prostrate in adoration. 'Wondrous orb,' he exclaimed, 'thou surely art the Creator and Ruler of all nature! but thou, too, hastest like the rest to thy setting!—neither then art thou my Creator, my Lord, or my God!'"



ditary chieftain of the settlement in Carrhan. This separation of Abraham, as the single stock from which a new tribe was to trace its unmingled descent, is ascribed to the express command of God. Already while in Ur, Abram had received some communication from the Deity ; to his departure into Canaan he was incited by a direct promise, the most splendid which could be offered to the ambition of the head of a nomadic tribe, in which numbers constitute power and wealth : His seed was to become hereafter a great nation. A more obscure and mysterious intimation was added, that some part of his future race should exercise a most important influence on the destinies of mankind. The family of Abram, already grown into a petty clan, moved with all their flocks and slaves across the Euphrates ; according to a tradition preserved by Justin and by an ancient author quoted in Josephus, dwelt some time near Damascus, and arriving at length in Palestine, settled first at Sechem, a valley between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim ; then in a hilly region to the north of Jericho, afterwards called the Desert of Quarantania. As the pastures were exhausted, the tribe moved southward, till a famine again drove them forth, and Egypt, probably the earliest, certainly the most productive, corn-country of the ancient world, became, as at a later period, the only place of refuge.

Except as showing that the valley of the Nile was already occupied by an industrious agricultural population, the visit of Abram throws little light on the existing state of Egypt. The monarch seems to have lived in considerable state, and



possessed a numerous seraglio, which was supplied by any means, however lawless or violent. This was so notorious, that Abram, though an independent Sheik or Emir, if his fair-complexioned Mesopotamian wife should excite the cupidity of the swarthy Egyptians, might apprehend the worst consequences. He ran the risk, not only of losing his wife, but of being murdered for the sake of so valuable a prize. He took the precaution, therefore, to make Sarai assume the name of his sister, (she was in fact his father's daughter, though not by the same mother,) perhaps hoping that, if sought in legitimate marriage, he might protract the espousals till the famine would permit him to make his escape from the country. The event justified his apprehensions; Sarai was seized and transferred to the harem of the sovereign, who was so proud of his acquisition as to make magnificent presents to Abram, intended, it may seem, as a dowry for his sister. In a short time a pestilence broke out in the royal family: the king, having discovered the relationship between Abram and Sarai, attributed the visitation to the God of the stranger, who thus revenged his breach of hospitality. Abram received back his wife, and returned to Canaan loaded with possessions suited to his habits of life—"sheep and oxen, and he asses, and men servants, and maid servants, and she asses and camels," a curious picture of the wealth of a pastoral chieftain. In Canaan, Abram is described, as not merely rich in these simpler commodities, but in silver and gold, obtained, probably, in exchange for the produce of his flocks and herds, from the settled native population of

the towns. Abram first re-occupied his former encampment, near the site where Bethel subsequently stood, and offered sacrifice for his safe return from Egypt, on an altar which he had before built on one of the adjacent heights. There the pastures proving insufficient for the great stock of cattle which the tribe possessed, disputes arose between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. The chieftains, dreading lest the native clans should take advantage of their divisions, and expel or plunder both, agreed to part amicably, and thenceforth inhabit independent settlements. Lot departed eastward into the rich and blooming valley of the Jordan, then abounding in flourishing towns. This separation still farther secured the unmingled descent of the Abrahamitic family; and the Almighty renewed the promise of a race, countless as the dust of the earth, the future possessors of Palestine, which Abram was commanded to survey from its northern to its southern, its eastern to its western extremities, as the inalienable patrimony of his descendants. In pursuance of this command, Abram again moved his encampment, and the tents of his tribe were pitched in the southern plain of Mamre. But the more fertile district which had attracted the choice of Lot, exposed him to perpetual dangers. The rich valley of the Jordan was invaded by a confederacy of the kingdoms on the Euphrates and Tigris, headed by Cedor-Laomer, king of Elam (Elymais). His subordinate allies were Amraphel, king of Shinaar (the Babylonian plain), Arioch, king of Ellasar (perhaps Thelassar), and Tidal, king of Nations. Whether a considerable monarchy had already

grown up on the banks of the Tigris, or whether this was a league of several small predatory tribes, does not appear from the Hebrew annalist. The independent princes in the valley of the Jordan, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Tseboim, and Tsoar, submitted to pay tribute. Thirteen years after, they endeavoured to throw off the yoke ; but Cedor-Laomer advanced into the country, subdued all the neighbouring tribes, some of whom were of gigantic stature, and at last joined battle with the princes of the Jordan, in the vale of Siddim. There the ground was broken with deep pits and fissures caused by the bituminous nature of the soil ; the troops of the five confederates were routed, two of the kings fell among the pits, the rest of the army dispersed, and Lot, among others, was seized as a captive. A fugitive brought the intelligence to Abram, who hastily collected three hundred and eighteen of his own clan, called some of the neighbouring tribes to his assistance, and pursued the enemy to a place near the fountains of the Jordan. He fell on their camp by night, dispersed them, rescued Lot, with the rest of the prisoners, and recovered the booty. This defeat, by so small a force, is thought to give but a mean notion of the strength of the invading army, yet among undisciplined troops of different nations, the panic from an unexpected night attack is often so great, that the inference can scarcely be considered decisive. This bold exploit ensured the admiration and gratitude of all the native chieftains. The king of Salem (by some thought to be Jerusalem, by others a town near Scythopolis, where a ruin, called Melchizedek's palace,

was shown in the time of Jerom) met him at a place called the King's Vale (sometimes identified with the valley of Jehoshaphat). Melchi-Zedech, the King of Justice, (such was his honourable title,) united in his own person, like the monarchs of the heroic ages in Greece and Rome, and indeed of most among the early oriental tribes, the office of king and priest. Like Abram he worshipped the one Great God, in whose name he blessed the deliverer of his country from foreign invaders, and refreshed his troops with bread and wine. On his part, Abram, according to general custom, consecrated a tenth part of the spoil to their common Deity by Melchizedeck, whose priesthood he thus recognized. As he rivalled Melchizedeck in piety, so Abram equalled the king of Sodom in generosity; he refused to retain any part of the spoil, not so much as a shoe-latchet, he only reserved a portion for the young native sheiks, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, who had joined him in his expedition. But the pious conqueror returned to a childless tent and a barren wife. The name, the chieftainship, of his clan, would pass away into the line of a stranger, Eliezer of Damascus, who held the next rank in the tribe. Yet the divine promise was repeatedly renewed, and under the most striking circumstances. One night as Abram gazed on the cloudless heavens, the Celestial Voice commanded him to count the stars of the firmament, for even so numerous should be his descendants. The aged and childless man yielded up his soul to perfect reliance on his Almighty Benefactor. The promise was further ratified by a covenant, transacted in the

primitive form of federal compact, which subsisted among various nations to a late period. A sacrifice was offered, the victims exactly divided, and the contracting parties passed between the two halves, which lay opposite to each other. Abram offered an heifer of three years old, a she goat of three years old, a ram of three years old, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. These he divided, except the birds, and sat watching till the evening, lest the fowls of prey should stoop upon them. As the sun declined, a deep sleep fell upon him, and more than common darkness spread around. A voice announced the fate of his posterity, their servitude of four centuries in a foreign land, their return, their possession of the whole territory from the Euphrates to the sea. As the sun set, the symbol of the Deity, a cloud of smoke like that of a furnace, a flashing fire like that of a lamp, passed between the severed victims, and thus solemnly ratified the covenant. Still the tent of Abram resounded not with the welcome cry of infancy. At length Sarai, despairing of issue from her own body, had recourse to a custom still known in the East, particularly in China. The chief or lawful wife substitutes a slave in her own place: the children born in this manner have the rank and privilege of legitimacy, and are considered in every respect as the offspring of the mistress of the establishment. In this manner Hagar, an Egyptian slave, bore a son to Abram: he was named Ishmael. Fourteen years after, when Abram was a hundred, Sarah ninety years old, a new revelation from the Divinity announced the surprising intelligence that Sarah



herself was to bear a son. There is something singularly beautiful in the attachment of Abram to the first child, who had awakened the parental feeling in his bosom. He would fain transfer the blessing to Ishmael, and is reluctant to sacrifice the earliest object of his pride and joy to the unborn son of Sarah. But the race of Abram is to be beyond every possible impeachment on its legitimacy; Abram is commanded to assume the mysterious name of Abraham (the father of a multitude), as the ancestor of a great and numerous people, who were to descend from Sarah, and become lords of all Palestine. The tribe were to be distinguished by the rite of circumcision, perhaps before, certainly afterwards, common to many people of the East; a rite of great utility, as conducing, in southern climates, both to health and cleanliness.

During this time Abraham had occupied his former encampment near Hebron. Here, as he sat in the door of his tent, three mysterious strangers appeared. Abraham, with true Arabian hospitality, received and entertained them. The chief of the three renewed the promise of a son to be born from Sarah, a promise which the aged woman received with laughter. As they pass forth towards the valley of the Jordan, the same Divine Being, for so he manifestly appears to be, announces the dreadful ruin impending over the licentious cities among which Lot had taken up his abode. No passage, even in the sacred writings, exhibits a more exalted notion of the Divinity, than that in which Abraham is permitted to expostulate on the apparent injustice of involv-



ing the innocent in the ruin of the guilty. "Shall the city perish (he successively asks) if fifty, if forty-five, if forty, if thirty, if twenty, if ten righteous men be found within its walls?" "Ten righteous men shall avert its doom." Such was the promise of the Celestial Visitant—but the guilt was universal, the ruin inevitable. The horrible outrage attempted against the two inferior of these preternatural beings, who descended to the city; the violation of the sacred laws of hospitality and nature, which Lot, in his horror, attempted to avert by the most revolting expedient—confirmed the justice of the divine sentence.

The valley of the Jordan, in which the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, and Tseboim, were situated, was rich and highly cultivated. It is most probable that the river then flowed in a deep and uninterrupted channel down a regular descent, and discharged itself into the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. The cities stood on a soil broken and undermined with veins of bitumen and sulphur. These inflammable substances, set on fire by lightning, caused a tremendous convulsion; the water-courses, both the river and the canals by which the land was extensively irrigated, burst their banks; the cities, the walls of which were perhaps built from the combustible materials of the soil, were entirely swallowed up by the fiery inundation; and the whole valley, which had been compared to Paradise, and to the well-watered corn fields of the Nile, became a dead and fetid lake. The traditions of the country, reported by Strabo, Tacitus, and other ancient writers, kept alive the remembrance of this awful catastrophe. In the account of the latter, the number of cities

destroyed is magnified to thirteen. The whole region is described by modern travellers as a scene of gloomy desolation, precipitous crags hanging over dull and heavy waters—not indeed, as the local superstitions have asserted, devoid of life, for the lake abounds in fish, nor fatal to the birds which fly over it—but the specific gravity of the water is so great, that those who cannot swim, float on the top; and it is bitterly salt to the taste. Unwholesome fogs hang perpetually over the lake, and the stagnant surface is broken by clots of asphaltus, which are constantly bubbling up from the bottom. A distinguished modern geographer\* thus describes the present indications of the physical agency by which Divine Providence brought about this memorable destruction:—"The valley of the Jordan offers many traces of volcanoes: the bituminous and sulphurous water of Lake Asphaltites, the lavas and punice thrown out on its banks, and the warm baths of Tabarieh, show that this valley has been the theatre of a fire not yet extinguished. Volumes of smoke are often observed to escape from Lake Asphaltites, and new crevices are found on its margin."

Lot, warned of the impending ruin, fled with his daughters. His wife, in contempt of repeated warnings, lingering behind, was suffocated by the sulphureous vapours, and her body encrusted with the saline particles which filled the atmosphere†. Later tradition, founded on a literal interpretation

\* Malte Brun.

† The view of this and the preceding transaction is chiefly taken from two learned dissertations of Le Clerc. The author finds, on reference, that the authorities quoted by the learned editors of the "Family Bible," on this and many similar points, concur with his own.

of the Mosaic account, pointed to a heap or column of salt, which bore perhaps some resemblance to a human form, and was believed, even by the historian Josephus, who had seen it, to be the pillar into which she was transformed. Lot fled first to Zoar, near the end of the present lake, then into the mountains. The tribes of Ammon and Moab, famous in the Jewish history, were derived from an incestuous connexion into which he was betrayed by his daughters, who according to Josephus, supposing themselves and their father the only surviving remnant of mankind, the rest having perished in the recent catastrophe, did not scruple to violate the laws of nature.

While these rival tribes were thus born of incest, amid all the horrors of convulsed nature, the legitimate parent of the numerous offspring promised to Abraham is at length born. He is named Isaac, from the laughter of Sarah when the birth was announced. But now the jealous apprehensions of the mother are directed against Hagar and her child. Usage, stronger than written law, gives to the chief wife in the tent of wandering pastoral people unlimited authority over her female slaves. Hagar had already been exposed to the jealousy of Sarah when, previous to the birth of Ishmael, she had been treated with such harshness as to fly into the wilderness, whence she had returned by the direction of an angel. Sarah now insists, and Abraham, receiving a divine intimation as to the destiny of the elder born, complies with her demand, that Hagar and Ishmael should be sent forth, to seek their fortune in some of the unoc-

cupied and uncultivated districts which lay around. The supply of provisions which they carried from the tent of Abraham soon failed, and the mother and the youth wandered into a district which was destitute of water. History or poetry scarcely presents us with any passage which surpasses in simple pathos the description of Hagar, not daring to look upon her child, while he is perishing with thirst before her face. *And she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept.* But Ishmael likewise was to become the father of a great people; by divine interposition Hagar discovered a well, the water restored them to life. Ishmael either joined some horde of Arabs, or maintained himself in independence by his bow, till his mother obtained him an Egyptian wife. The wandering Arabs to this day, by general traditions adopted into the Koran, trace their descent to the outcast son of Abraham. "The wild man whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him," still waylays the traveller by the fountain, or sweeps his rapid troop of horse across the track of the wealthy caravan.

The faith of Abraham was to pass through a more trying ordeal. He is suddenly commanded to cut off that life on which all the splendid promises of the Almighty seemed to depend. He obeys, and sets forth with his unsuspecting child to offer the fatal sacrifice on Mount Moriah. The immolation of human victims, particularly of the most precious, the favourite, the first-born child,

appears as a common usage among many early nations, more especially the tribes by which Abraham was surrounded. It was the distinguishing rite among the worshippers of Moloch; at a later period of the Jewish history, it was practised by a king of Moab; it was undoubtedly derived by the Carthaginians from their Phœnician ancestors on the shores of Syria. The offering of Isaac bears no resemblance either in its nature, or what may be termed its moral purport, to these horrid rites. Where it was an ordinary usage, as in the worship of Moloch, it was in unison with the character of the religion, and of the deity. It was the last act of a dark and sanguinary superstition, which rose by regular gradation to this complete triumph over human nature. The god who was propitiated by these offerings, had been satiated with more cheap and vulgar victims; he had been glutted to the full with human suffering and with human blood. In general it was the final mark of the subjugation of the national mind to an inhuman and domineering priesthood. But the Hebrew religion held human sacrifices in abhorrence; the God of the Abrahamitic family, uniformly beneficent, imposed no duties which entailed human suffering, demanded no offerings which were repugnant to the better feelings of our nature. Where, on the other hand, these filial sacrifices were of rare and extraordinary occurrence, they were either to expiate some dreadful guilt, to avert the imminent vengeance of the offended deity, or to extort his blessing on some important enterprise. But the offering of Isaac was neither piacular nor propitiatory; Abra-



ham had committed no guilt, and apprehended no danger; the immolation of his only son seemed for ever to deprive him of that blessing which was nearest to his heart, the parentage of a numerous and powerful tribe. It was a simple act of unhesitating obedience to the divine command; the last proof of perfect reliance on the certain accomplishment of the divine promises. Isaac, so miraculously bestowed, could be as miraculously restored; Abraham, such is the comment of the Christian Apostle, *believed that God could even raise him up from the dead*. Still while the great example of primitive piety appears no less willing to offer the most precious victim on the altar of his God, than the idolaters around him, the God of the Hebrews maintains his benign and beneficent character. After every thing is prepared, the wood of the altar laid, even the sacrificial knife uplifted, the arm of the father is arrested; a single ram, entangled by his horns in a thicket, is substituted, and Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide. Near this same spot, eighteen centuries after, Jesus Christ was offered, the victim, as the Christian world has almost universally believed, “provided by the Lord”—inexplicable, if undesigned, coincidence! This last trial of his faith thus passed, the promise of the divine blessing was renewed to Abraham in still more express and vivid terms. His seed were to be numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the sea shore; their enemies were to fall before them; and the whole world was to receive some remote and mysterious blessing through the channel of this favoured race.

After this epoch the incidents in the life of Abraham are less important, yet still characteristic of the age and the state of society. He lived on terms of amity with the native princes, particularly with Abimelek, the king of Gerar, on whose territories his encampment at one time bordered. With Abimelek an adventure took place, so similar in its circumstances with the seizure and restoration of Sarah in Egypt, as almost to excite a suspicion that it is a traditional variation of the same transaction, more particularly as it is unquestionably related out of its place in the Mosaic narrative, and again repeated in the life of Isaac. Abimelek permitted the stranger sheik to pitch his tent, and pasture his flocks and herds in any part of his domains. The only dispute related to the valuable possession of a well, and this was prudently and amicably arranged.

The death of Sarah gave occasion for another friendly treaty with the native princes. Every independent tribe has its separate place of burial: the family union continues in the grave. The patriarch or parent of the tribe has the place of honour in the common cemetery, which is usually hewn out of the rock, sometimes into spacious chambers, supported by pillars and with alcoves in the sides where the coffins are deposited. Each successive generation, according to the common expression, is *gathered to their fathers*. On Abraham's demand for permission to purchase a place of sepulture, the chiefs of the tribe of Heth assemble to debate the weighty question. The first resolution is to offer the rich and popular stranger the unusual privilege of interring his dead in their

national sepulchres. As this might be misconstrued into a formal union between the clans, Abraham declines the hospitable offer. He even refuses as a gift, and insists on purchasing, for four hundred pieces of silver, a field named Machpelah, surrounded by trees, in which stood a rock well suited for sepulchral excavation. Here, unmingled with those of any foreign tribe, his own remains, and those of Sarah, are to repose.

In another important instance the isolation of the Abrahamitic family, and its pure descent from the original Mesopotamian stock is carefully kept up. The wife of Isaac is sought not among their Canaanitish neighbours, but among his father's kindred in Carrhan. At a later period the same feeling of attachment to the primitive tribe, and aversion from mingling with the idolatrous Canaanites, is shewn in the condemnation of Esau, for taking his wives from the inhabitants of the country, *which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah*, while Jacob is sent to seek a wife in the old Mesopotamian settlement. So completely does the seclusion and separation of Abraham, and his descendants run through the whole history. Abraham solemnly adjures his most faithful servant whom he dispatches to Carrhan on this matrimonial mission for his son, to discharge his embassy with fidelity. Having sworn by the singular ceremony of placing his hand under his master's thigh, a custom of which the origin is unknown, the servant sets off with his camels, and arrives in safety near the old encampment of the tribe. At the usual place of meeting, the well, he encounters Rebekah, the beautiful daughter of



Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother Nahor. The courteous maiden assists him in watering his camels ; her relations receive him with equal hospitality. The intelligence of Abraham's wealth, confirmed by the presents of gold and jewels which he produced, make them consent with alacrity to the betrothing of the damsel to the son of Abraham. The messenger and Rebekah reach in safety the encampment of Abraham ; and Isaac when he hears the sound of the returning camels beholds a fair maiden modestly veiled, whom he conducts and puts in possession of the tent of his mother Sarah, that which belonged to the chief wife of the head of the tribe.

After the death of Sarah, Abraham took another wife, Keturah, by whom he had many children. Isaac, however, continued his sole heir, the rest were sent away into the east country ; their descendants are frequently recognized among the people noticed in the Jewish annals, but always as aliens from the stock of Abraham. At length the Patriarch died, and was buried in Machpelah, by Ishmael and Isaac, who met in perfect amity to perform the last duty to the head and father of their tribes.

Such is the history of their great ancestor, preserved in the national records of the Jewish people, remarkable for its simplicity and historic truth, when compared with the mythic or poetic traditions of almost all other countries. The genealogies of most nations, particularly the eastern, are lost among their gods ; it is impossible to define where fable ceases, and history begins ; and the earlier we ascend the more indistinct and

marvellous the narrative. In the Hebrew record it is precisely the converse, God and man are separated by a wide and impassable interval—Abraham is the Emir of a pastoral tribe, migrating from place to place, his stations marked with geographical accuracy, and with a picturesque simplicity of local description ; here he pitches his tent by some old and celebrated tree, there on the brink of a well-known fountain. He is in no respect superior to his age or country, excepting in the sublime purity of his religion. He is neither demi-god nor mighty conqueror, nor even sage, nor inventor of useful arts. His distinction is the worship of the One Great God, and the intercourse which he is permitted to hold with this mysterious Being. This is the great patrimonial glory which he bequeaths to his descendants ; their title to be considered the chosen people of the Almighty, is their inalienable hereditary possession. This is the key to their whole history, the basis of their political institutions, the vital principal of their national character.

The life of Isaac was far less eventful, nor is it necessary for the right understanding of the Jewish history, to relate its incidents so much at length as those of the great progenitor of the Jewish people. At first, the divine promise of a numerous posterity proceeds very slowly towards its accomplishment. After some years of barrenness Rebekah bears twins, already before their birth seeming to struggle for superiority, as the heads and representatives of two hostile people. They were as opposite in their disposition as in their way of life. The red-haired Esau was a wild hunter, and ac-

quired the fierce and reckless character which belongs to the ruder state of society to which he reverted ; Jacob retained the comparative gentleness of the more thoughtful and regular pastoral occupation. It is curious to observe the superior fitness in the habits and disposition of the younger, Jacob, to become the parent of an united and settled people. Though the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, ranked in civilization far above the marauding Bedouins, who sprung from Ishmael ; though Esau himself possessed at a later period considerable wealth in flocks and herds, yet the scattered clans of the Edomites, at perpetual war with each other and with their neighbours, living, according to the expression of the sacred writer, by the sword, retain as it were the stamp of the parental character, and seem less adapted to the severe discipline of the Mosaic institutions, or to become a nation of peaceful husbandmen. The precarious life of the hunter soon laid him at the mercy of his more prudent or rather crafty brother. After a day of unsuccessful hunting, Esau sold his right of primogeniture for a mess of herbs. The privilege of the first-born seems to have consisted in the acknowledged headship of the tribe, to which the office of priest and sacrificer was inseparably attached. Esau, therefore, thus carelessly threw away both his civil and religious inheritance, and abandoned all title to the promises made to his tribe.

Whether the parental blessing was supposed of itself to confer or to confirm the right of primogeniture, is not quite clear ; but the terms in which it was conveyed by Isaac, “ Be lord over thy

brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down before thee," seem to intimate a regular investiture with the supreme authority, as head of the tribe. This blessing, couched in these emphatic words, which Isaac evidently doubted his power to retract, was intercepted, with the assistance of his mother, by the subtle and unscrupulous Jacob. These repeated injuries roused the spirit of revenge in the indignant hunter; he only waits the decease of his father that he may recover his rights by the death of his rival. But Rebekah anticipates the crime. Jacob is sent to the original birthplace of the tribe, partly to secure him from the impending danger, partly that, avoiding all connexion with the Canaanites, he may intermarry only with the descendants of his forefathers. On his way to Mesopotamia, the promise made to Abraham is renewed in that singular vision—so expressively symbolical of the universal providence of God—the flight of steps uniting earth and heaven, with the ministering angels perpetually ascending and descending. In commemoration of this vision, Jacob sets up a sort of primitive monument—a pillar of stone. The adventures of Jacob among his nomadic ancestors present a most curious and characteristic view of their simple manners and usages. His meeting with Rachel at the well; the hospitality of Laban to his sister's son; his agreement to serve seven years\* to obtain

\* "I once met with a young man who had served eight years for his food only; at the end of that period he obtained in marriage the daughter of his master, for whom he would otherwise have had to pay seven or eight hundred piastres. When I saw him he had been married three years; but he

Rachel in marriage ; the public ceremony of espousals in the presence of the tribe ; the stratagem of Laban to substitute his elder for his younger and fairer daughter, in order to bind the enamoured stranger to seven years' longer service ; the little jealousies of the sisters, not on account of the greater share in their husband's affections, but their own fertility ; the substitution of their respective handmaids ; the contest in cunning and subtlety between Laban and Jacob, the former endeavouring to defraud the other of his due wages, and at the same time to retain so useful a servant, under whom his flocks had so long prospered—the latter, apparently, by his superior acquaintance with the habits of the animals which he tended, and with the divine sanction, securing all the stronger and more flourishing part of the flocks for his own portion ; the flight of Jacob, not as so rich a resident ought to have been dismissed *with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp* ; Laban's religious awe of one so manifestly under the Divine protection ; Rachel's purloining and concealment of her father's Teraphim ; above all, their singular treaty, in which Laban at length consents to the final separation of this great family, with which he had expected to increase the power and opulence of his tribe ;—all these incidents throw us back into a state of society

bitterly complained of his father-in-law, who continued to require of him the performance of the most servile offices, without paying him any thing ; and that prevented him from setting up for himself and family."—*Burckhardt's Travels in Syria*, p. 297. This was in the Haouran, the district south-east of Damascus.



different not merely from modern usages, but from those which prevailed among the Jews after their return from Egypt. The truth and reality of the picture is not more apparent than its appropriate locality in the regions which it describes:—it is neither Egyptian nor Palestinian, nor even Arabian, life; it breathes the free air of the wide and open plains of inland Asia, where the primitive inhabitants are spreading, without opposition or impediment, with their flocks, and herds, and camels, over unbounded and unoccupied regions.

Isaac, in the mean time, had continued to dwell as a husbandman, towards the southern border of the promised land. Early in life he had begun to cultivate the soil, which amply repaid his labours. He seems to have been superior to the native population in one most useful art, not improbably learned by his father in Egypt, that of sinking wells. The manner in which the native herdsmen drove him from place to place as soon as he had enriched it with that possession, so invaluable in an arid soil, indicates want of skill, or at least, of success, in providing for themselves. Perhaps it was as much by ignorant neglect as by wanton malice, that the Philistines suffered those formerly sunk by Abraham to fall into decay and become filled with earth.

Jacob had crossed the Jordan with nothing but the staff which he carried in his hand; he returned with immense wealth in cattle, flocks, asses, and camels, male and female slaves; and with the more inestimable treasure of eleven sons, born to him in Mesopotamia. But before he could venture to re-

turn to his father, he must appease the resentment of his injured brother. Upon the borders of the land of Canaan, at a place called Mahanaim (from a vision of angels seen there), he sends messengers to announce his approach as far as Seir, a district extending from the foot of the Dead Sea. There Esau was already established as the chieftain of a powerful tribe, for he sets forth to meet his brother at the head of 400 men. The peaceful company of Jacob are full of apprehension; he sends forward a splendid present of 200 she goats, 20 he goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milch camels, with their colts, 40 kine, 10 bulls, 20 she asses and 10 foals; he likewise takes the precaution of dividing his company into two parts, in order that if one shall be attacked the other may escape. Having made these arrangements, he sends his family over a brook, called the Jabbok, which lay before him. In the night he is comforted by another symbolic vision, in which he supposes himself wrestling with a mysterious being, from whom he extorts a blessing, and is commanded from thenceforth to assume the name of Israel (the prevailing): for, having prevailed against God, so his race are to prevail against men.\* Yet he does not entirely relax his caution:

\* An awful respect for the divine nature induces us to adopt, with some learned writers, the notion, that this contest took place in a dream, as Josephus says, with a phantasm. It should be added, that, whether real or visionary, Jacob bore an outward mark or memorial of this conflict, in the withering of the back sinew of the thigh. His descendants abstained till the time of Moses, and still abstain, from that part of every animal slain for food.

as he and his family advance to meet the dreaded Esau, the handmaids and their children are put foremost; then Leah with hers last; of all, as with the best chance of escape, should any treachery be intended, the favourite Rachel and her single child Joseph. But the hunter, though violent, was nevertheless frank, generous, and forgiving. While Jacob approaches with signs of reverence, perhaps of apprehension, *Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept.* At first he refuses the offered present, but at length accepts it as a pledge of fraternal amity, and proposes that they should set forward together and unite their encampments. The cautious Jacob, still apprehensive of future misunderstandings, alleges the natural excuse, that his party, encumbered with their cattle, their wives and children, must travel more slowly than the expeditious troop of the Edomites; and immediately on his brother's departure, instead of following him to Seir, turns off towards the Jordan; encamps first at Succoth, then crosses the Jordan, and settles near Shalem. Here he purchases a field of the inhabitants, and resides in security, until a feud with the princes of the country drives him forth to seek a safer encampment. Sechem, the son of Hamor, the great chieftain of the tribes which occupied that part of Canaan, violated Dinah, the daughter of Jacob.

In all Arabian tribes, the brother is most deeply wounded by an outrage on the chastity of the females, (a part of Spanish manners, no doubt inherited from their Arabian ancestry;) on him devolves the duty of exacting vengeance for the



indignity offered to the tribe or family. Simeon and Levi, without consulting their father, take up the quarrel. Sechem offers to marry the damsel; his father and his people, not averse to an union with the wealthy strangers, consent to submit to circumcision, as the condition of the marriage, and as a pledge to the solemn union of the clans. While they are disabled from resistance, by the consequences of the operation, Simeon and Levi, with their followers, fall on the city, put the inhabitants to the sword, and pillage the whole territory. The sense of this act of cruelty to his allies, and disregard to his own authority, sank deep into the heart of the peaceful Jacob. In his last vision, Simeon and Levi are reprobated as violent and bloodthirsty men, and, as if this dangerous disposition had descended upon their posterity, they are punished, or rather prevented from bringing ruin upon the whole race, by receiving a smaller and a divided portion of the promised land. Jacob retreated to Luz, where he had formerly parted from his brother Esau. Here the family was solemnly dedicated to God; all the superstitious practices which they had brought from Mesopotamia were forbidden; the little images of the tutelar deities, even the earrings, probably considered as amulets or talismans, were taken away and buried. On the other hand, the magnificent promise, repeatedly made to Abraham and Isaac, was once more renewed to Jacob. An altar was raised, and the place called Beth-el, the House of God. From Luz, Jacob removed to Ephrath or Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ. There his favourite wife Rachel died in childbed, having

given birth to his youngest son, called by the expiring mother Ben-oni, the child of her sorrow, by the father Ben-jamin, the son of his right hand. Having raised a sepulchral pillar over her remains, he sets forth to a new settlement near the tower of Edar, the site of which is unknown. Here his domestic peace was disturbed by another crime, the violation of his concubine, Billah, by Reuben, his eldest son. At length he rejoins his father, Isaac, in the plain of Mamre, where the old man dies, and is honourably buried by his two sons. But from henceforward the two branches of Isaac's family were entirely separated. The country about Mount Seir became the permanent residence of the Edomites, who were governed first by independent sheiks or princes, afterwards were united under one monarchy. Jacob continued to dwell in Canaan, with his powerful family and ample possessions, until dissensions among his sons prepared the way for more important changes, which seemed to break for ever the connexion between the race of Abraham and the land of Canaan, but ended in establishing them as the sole possessors of the whole territory.

Here then let us pause, and, before we follow the family of Jacob into a country where the government and usages of the people were so totally different, look back on the state of society described in the Patriarchal History. Mankind appears in its infancy, gradually extending its occupancy over regions, either entirely unappropriated, or as yet so recently and thinly peopled, as to admit, without resistance, the new swarms of settlers which seem to spread from the birthplace

of the human race, the plains of Central Asia. They are peaceful pastoral nomads, travelling on their camels, the ass the only other beast of burthen; the horse appears to have been unknown—fortunately, perhaps, for themselves and their neighbours—for the possession of that animal seems fatal to habits of peace. The nomads, who are horsemen, are almost always marauders. The power of sweeping rapidly over a wide district, and retreating as speedily, offers irresistible temptation to a people of roaming and unsettled habits. But the unenterprising shepherds, from whom the Hebrew tribe descended, move onward as their convenience or necessity require, or as richer pastures attract their notice. Wherever they settle, they sink wells, and thus render unpeopled districts habitable. It is still more curious to observe how the progress of improvement is incidentally betrayed in the summary account of the ancient record. Abraham finds no impediment to his settling wherever fertile pastures invite him to pitch his camp. It is only a place of burial in which he thinks of securing a proprietary right; Jacob, on the contrary, purchases a field to pitch his tent. When Abraham is exposed to famine, he appears to have had no means of supply, but to go down himself to Egypt. In the time of Jacob a regular traffic in corn existed between the two countries, and caravansaries were established on the way. Trading caravans had likewise begun to traverse the Arabian deserts, with the spices and other products of the East, and with slaves, which they imported into Egypt. Among the simpler nomads of Mesopotamia, wages in money

were unknown; among the richer Phœnician tribes, gold and silver were already current. It has been the opinion of some learned men that Abraham paid the money for his bargain by weight, Jacob in pieces, rudely coined or stamped. When Abraham receives the celestial strangers, with true Arabian hospitality he kills the calf with his own hands, but has nothing more generous to offer than the Scythian beverage of milk; yet the more civilized native tribes seem, by the offering of Melchizedek, to have had wine at their command. Isaac, become more wealthy, and having commenced the tillage of the soil, had acquired a taste for savoury meats, and had wine for his ordinary use. The tillage of Isaac bespeaks the richness of a virgin soil, as yet unbroken by the plough—it returned an hundred for one. These primitive societies were constituted in the most simple and inartificial manner. The parental authority, and that of the head of the tribe, was supreme and without appeal. Esau so far respects even his blind and feeble father, as to postpone the gratification of his revenge till the death of Isaac. Afterwards, the brothers who conspire against Joseph, though some of them had already dipped their hands in blood, dare not perpetrate their crime openly. When they return from Egypt to fetch Benjamin, in order to redeem one of their company, left in apparent danger of his life, they are obliged to obtain the consent of Jacob, and do not think of carrying him off by force. Reuben, indeed, leaves his own sons as hostages, under an express covenant that they are to be put to death if he does not bring Benjamin back. The father

seems to have possessed the power of transferring the right of primogeniture to a younger son. This was perhaps the effect of Isaac's blessing ; Jacob seems to have done the same, and disinherited the three elder sons of Leah. The desire of offspring, and the pride of becoming the ancestor of a great people, with the attendant disgrace of barrenness, however in some degree common to human nature, and not unknown in thickly peopled countries, yet as the one predominant and absorbing passion (for such it is in the patriarchal history) belongs more properly to a period, when the earth still offered ample room for each tribe to extend its boundaries without encroaching on the possessions of its neighbour.

These incidents, in themselves trifling, are not without interest, both as illustrative of human manners, and as tending to show that the record from which they are drawn was itself derived from cotemporary traditions, which it has represented with scrupulous fidelity. Even the characters of the different personages are singularly in unison with the state of society described. There is the hunter, the migratory herdsman, and the incipient husbandman. The quiet and easy Isaac adapts himself to the more fixed and sedentary occupation of tillage. Esau the hunter is reckless, daring, and improvident ; Jacob the herdsman, cautious, observant, subtle, and timid. Esau excels in one great virtue of uncivilized life, bravery ; Jacob in another, which is not less highly appreciated, craft. Even in Abraham we do not find that nice and lofty sense of veracity which distinguishes a state of society where the point of honour



has acquired great influence. It is singular that this accurate delineation of primitive manners, and the discrimination of individual character in each successive patriarch, with all the imperfections and vices, as well of the social state as of the particular disposition, although so conclusive an evidence to the honesty of the narrative, has caused the greatest perplexity to many pious minds, and as great triumph to the adversaries of revealed religion. The object of this work is strictly historical, not theological; yet a few observations may be ventured on this point, considering its important bearing on the manner in which Jewish history ought to be written and read. Some will not read the most ancient and curious history in the world, because it is in the Bible; others read it in the Bible with a kind of pious awe, which prevents them from comprehending its real spirit. The latter look on the distinguished characters in the Mosaic annals as a kind of sacred beings, scarcely allied to human nature. Their intercourse with the Divinity invests them with a mysterious sanctity, which is expected to extend to all their actions. Hence when they find the same passions at work, the ordinary feelings and vices of human nature prevalent both among the ancestors of the chosen people, and the chosen people themselves, they are confounded and distressed. Writers unfriendly to revealed religion, starting with the same notion, that the Mosaic narrative is uniformly exemplary, not historical, have enlarged with malicious triumph on the delinquencies of the patriarchs and their descendants. Perplexity and triumph surely equally

groundless ! Had the avowed design of the intercourse of God with the patriarchs been their own unimpeachable perfection ; had that of the Jewish polity been the establishment of a divine Utopia, advanced to premature civilization, and overleaping at once those centuries of slow improvement, through which the rest of mankind were to pass, then it might have been difficult to give a reasonable account of the manifest failure. So far from this being the case, an ulterior purpose is evident throughout. The patriarchs and their descendants are the depositaries of certain great religious truths, the unity, omnipotence, and providence of God, not solely for their own use and advantage, but as conservators for the future universal benefit of mankind. Hence, provided the great end, the preservation of those truths, was eventually obtained, human affairs took their ordinary course ; the common passions and motives of mankind were left in undisturbed operation. Superior in one respect alone, the ancestors of the Jews, and the Jews themselves, were not beyond their age or country in acquirements, in knowledge, or even in morals ; as far as morals are modified by usage and opinion. They were polygamists, like the rest of the eastern world ; they acquired the virtues and the vices of each state of society through which they passed. Higher and purer notions of the Deity, though they tend to promote and improve, by no means necessarily enforce moral perfection ; their influence will be regulated by the social state of the age in which they are promulgated, and the bias of the individual character to which they are addressed. Neither the actual interposition of the

Almighty in favour of an individual or nation, nor his employment of them as instruments for certain important purposes, stamps the seal of divine approbation on all their actions ; in some cases, as in the deception practised by Jacob on his father, the worst part of their character manifestly contributes to the purpose of God ; still the nature of the action is not altered ; it is to be judged by its motive, not by its undesigned consequence. Allowance, therefore, being always made for their age and social state, the patriarchs, kings, and other Hebrew worthies, are amenable to the same verdict which would be passed on the eminent men of Greece or Rome. Excepting where they act under the express commandment of God, they have no exemption from the judgment of posterity ; and on the same principle, while God is on the scene, the historian will write with caution and reverence ; while man, with freedom, justice, and impartiality.

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## BOOK II.

### ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

*Family of Jacob—Joseph—State of Egypt—Famine—Migration of Jacob and his whole family—Administration of Joseph—Period between Joseph and Moses—Birth and Education of Moses.—Flight and Return to Egypt—Plagues of Egypt—Exodus or Departure of the Israelites—Passage of the Red Sea—Ancient Traditions.*



THE seed of Abraham had now become a family ; from the twelve sons of Israel it was to branch out into a nation. Of these sons the four elder had been born from the prolific Leah, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. The barren Rachel had substituted her handmaid Bilhah, who gave birth to Dan and Naphtali. Leah, after her sister's example, substituted Zilpah ; from her sprang Gad and Asher. Rachel, for the sake of some mandrakes, supposed among eastern women to act as a love philtre and remove barrenness, yielding up her right to her sister, Leah again bore Issachar and Zebulon, and a daughter, Dinah. At length the comely Rachel was blessed with Joseph ; and in Canaan, Benoni, or Benjamin completed the twelve.

The children of the handmaidens had no title to the primogeniture. Reuben had forfeited the esteem of his father by incest with his concubine ; Simeon and Levi by their cruelty towards the Sichemites. Judah, the next brother, was inadvertently betrayed into a serious crime. There was a singular usage afterwards admitted into the Mosaic law, that in case a married man died without issue, his next brother was bound to take his wife, in order that his line might not become extinct. The perpetuation of their name and race through their offspring being then, as it is still in

some countries of the East, the one great object to which all moral laws, even those generally recognised, were to give way. The eldest son of Judah, Er, died ; the second, Onan, was guilty of a criminal dereliction of that indispensable duty, and was cut off for his offence. Judah, neglecting his promise to bestow the widow, Tamar, on his third son, Shelah, was betrayed into an unlawful connexion with her, and became the incestuous father of two children.

But Joseph, the elder born of the beloved Rachel, had always held the first place in the affections of his father. He was a beautiful youth, and it was the pride of the fond father to behold him in a dress distinguished from the rest of his sons — *a coat of many colours*. The envy of his brethren was still farther excited by two dreams seen by Joseph, which, in the frankness of his disposition, he took no pains to conceal. In one, the brothers were binding sheaves of corn, (a proof that they were advancing in the cultivation of the soil,) the sheaves of the brothers bent, and did homage to that of Joseph. In the other, the sun and the moon and eleven stars seemed to make obeisance to Joseph. Each of these successive visions intimated his future superiority over all the family of Israel. One day, when Joseph had set forth to the place where his brothers were accustomed to feed their flocks, they returned to their father's tent without him, bearing that very dress, on which Jacob had so often gazed with pleasure, steeped in blood. The agony of the old man cannot be described with such pathetic simplicity as in the language of the Sacred Volume,—*He re-*

*fused to be comforted, and he said I will go down into the grave with my son mourning.* But before he went down to the grave he was to behold his son under far different circumstances. His brothers, at first, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Reuben, the eldest born, a man of more mild and generous disposition, had determined on putting their hated rival to death. With this intention they had let him down into a pit, probably an old disused well. A caravan of Arabian traders happening to pass by, they acceded to the more merciful and advantageous proposition of Judah to sell him as a slave. Though these merchants were laden only with spicery, balm, and myrrh, commodities in great request in Egypt, all of them being used in embalming the dead, they were sure of a market for such a slave as Joseph, and in that degraded and miserable character he arrived in Egypt. But the Divine Providence watched, even in the land of the stranger, over the heir to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The slave rose with a rapidity surprising, though by no means unparalleled in eastern kingdoms, to be the all-powerful vizier of the king of Egypt. He was first bought by Potiphar, a chief officer of the king, the captain of the guard, by whom he was speedily promoted to the care of the whole household. The entire confidence of his master in the prudence and integrity of the servant is described in these singular terms,—*He left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat.* The virtue of Joseph in other respects was equal to his integrity, but not so well rewarded.

Falsely accused by the arts of his master's wife, whose criminal advances he had repelled, he was thrown into prison. The dungeon opens a way to still farther advancement. Wherever he is, he secures esteem and confidence. Like his former master, the keeper of the prison entrusts the whole of his responsible duties to the charge of Joseph. But the chief cause of his rapid rise to fortune and dignity is his skill in the interpretation of dreams. Among his fellow-prisoners were the chief cup-bearer and chief purveyor of the king. Each of these men was perplexed by an extraordinary vision. The interpretation of Joseph was justified by the fate of both; one, as he predicted, was restored to his honours, the other suffered an ignominious death. Through the report of the former, the fame of Joseph, in a character so important among a superstitious people, reached the palace, and when the king himself was in the same manner disturbed with visions which baffled the professed diviners of the country, Joseph was summoned from the prison. The dreams of the king, according to the exposition of Joseph, under the symbolic forms of seven fat and fleshy kine followed by seven lean and withered ones, seven good ears of corn by seven parched and blasted with the east wind, prefigured seven years of unexampled plenty, to be succeeded by seven of unexampled dearth. The advice of Joseph being demanded how to provide against the impending calamity, he recommends that a fifth part of the produce during the seven abundant years shall be laid up in granaries built for the purpose. The wisdom of this measure was apparent; and who



so fit to carry such plans into effect as he whose prudence had suggested them? Joseph, therefore, is at once installed in the dignity of chief minister over the whole of this great and flourishing kingdom.

The information we obtain from the Mosaic narrative, concerning the state and constitution of Egypt during this period, is both valuable in itself, and agrees strictly with all the knowledge which we acquire from other sources. Egypt had long been the great corn country of the ancient world, now in a high state of cultivation, but dependent for its fertility on the overflow of the river on whose banks it lay. Should the annual increase of the Nile be interrupted, the whole valley would remain a barren and unvegetating waste. The cause of the long period of famine is nowhere indicated, but it was by no means a local calamity; it extended to all the adjacent countries. A long and general drought, which would burn up the herbage of all the pastoral districts of Asia, might likewise diminish that accumulation of waters which, at its regular period, pours down the channel of the Nile. The waters are collected in the greatest part from the drainage of all the high levels in that region of central Africa, where the tropical rains, about the summer solstice, fall with incessant violence. But whatever might be its cause, Egypt escaped the famine which pressed so severely on other countries, only through the prudent administration of Joseph. It is necessary, however, before we describe the policy which he adopted, or the settlement of the family of Israel in this country, to give some insight into the state

of the Egyptian government and people ; for without this we shall neither be able to comprehend the transactions which relate to the Israelites in Egypt, nor the degree of originality to be assigned to the Mosaic institutions. Egypt, before this period, had enjoyed many centuries of civilization, most likely of opulence and splendour. Whether she had already reared her vast and mysterious pyramids, commenced the colossal temples of Ipsambul, and Thebes, or excavated those wonderful subterraneous sepulchral palaces for her dead kings, cannot at present be decided with certainty. But of her singular constitution we have distinct indications in the Mosaic narrative. The people were divided into castes, like those of India, as they exist to the present day, and as they formerly prevailed among many other oriental nations. At the head of these castes stood that of the priesthood. From this order the king was usually selected ; if one of the warriors, the next class in rank, should attain to that eminence, he was always installed and enrolled in the superior order. The priestly caste, in rank and power, stood far above the rest of the people. In each Nome or district (if indeed these divisions were of so early a date) stood a temple and a sacerdotal college. In them one third of the whole land of the country was inalienably vested. The priests were not merely the ministers of religion, they were the hereditary conservators of knowledge. They were the public astronomers, by whom all the agricultural labours of the people were regulated ; the public geometricians, whose service was indispensable, since the Nile annually oblite-



rated the landmarks of the country ; in their hieroglyphical characters the public events were recorded ; they were the physicians ; in short, to them belonged the whole patrimony of science, which was inseparably bound up with their religion. The political powers of this hereditary aristocracy were unbounded ; they engrossed apparently both the legislative and judicial functions ; they were the framers, the conservators, the expounders of the laws. As interpreter of dreams, Joseph, no doubt, intruded into the province of this all-powerful caste, and the king, not improbably with a view to disarm their jealousy, married his new vizier to the daughter of the Priest of the Sun, who dwelled in On, called afterwards by the Greeks Heliopolis (the City of the Sun). . Moreover, in the great political measure of Joseph, the resumption of all the lands into the hands of the crown, the sacred property of the priests was exempted from the operation of the law, and the whole class supported, during the famine, at the royal charge. The next caste in dignity was that of the warriors, called by Herodotus, Hermotybiæ or Kalasyries. The lower classes of the people constituted the rest of the orders ; according to Herodotus five, to Diodorus three more. The latter reckons husbandmen, artisans, and shepherds ; Herodotus, shepherds, swineherds, manufacturers and shopkeepers, interpreters, and mariners, that is, the boatmen of the Nile. The boundaries of these castes were unalterably fixed, the son held for ever the same rank, and pursued the same occupation with his father. The profession of a shepherd, probably the lowest of these

castes, was held in particular discredit. "Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians." Several reasons have been assigned for this remarkable fact. A German writer of great ability supposes, that when the first civilizers of Egypt, whom, from reasons, which every accession to our knowledge of ancient Egypt seems to confirm, he derives from Ethiopia, directed the attention of the people to tillage, for which the country was so admirably adapted, in order to wean the rude people from their nomadic habits, they studiously degraded the shepherds into a sort of Pariah caste. Another and a more general opinion derives this hostility to the name of shepherd from a recent and most important event in the Egyptian history. While Egypt was rapidly advancing in splendour and prosperity, a fierce and barbarous Asiatic horde burst suddenly upon her fruitful provinces, destroyed her temples, massacred her priests, and having subdued the whole of Lower Egypt, established a dynasty of six successive kings. These Hyksos, or royal shepherds, with their savage clans, afterwards expelled by the victorious Egyptians, Monsieur Champollion\* thinks, with apparent reason, that he recognises on many of the ancient monuments. A people with red hair, blue eyes, and covered only with an undressed hide loosely wrapped over them, are painted, sometimes struggling in deadly warfare with the natives, more usually in attitudes of the lowest degradation which the scorn and hatred of their conquerors could invent. They lie prostrate

\* Lettre à Mons. de Blacas, p. 57.

under the footstools of the kings, in the attitude described in the book of Joshua, where the rulers actually set their feet on the necks of the captive monarchs\*. The common people appear to have taken pride in having the figures of these detested enemies wrought on the soles of their sandals, that they might be thus perpetually trampled on : even the dead carried this memorial of their hatred into the grave ; the same figures are painted on the lower wrappers of the mummies, accompanied with similar marks of abhorrence and contempt. It would be difficult to find a more apt illustration of the phrase in the book of Genesis, "every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians." Several other incidents in the Mosaic history seem to confirm the opinion, that these invaders had been expelled, and that but recently, before the period of Joseph's administration.

The seven years of unexampled plenty passed away exactly as the interpreter of the royal dreams had foretold. During all this time, Joseph regularly exacted a fifth of the produce, which was stored up in granaries established by the government. The famine soon began to press heavily, not merely on Egypt, but on all the adjacent countries : among the first who came to purchase corn appeared the ten sons of Jacob. It is no easy task to treat, after the Jewish historian, the transactions which took place between Joseph and his family. The relation in the book of Genesis is, perhaps, the most exquisite model of the manner in which history, without elevating its

\* Joshua x. 24.

tone, or departing from its plain and unadorned veracity, assumes the language and spirit of the most touching poetry. The cold and rhetorical paraphrase of Josephus, sometimes a writer of great vigour and simplicity, enforces the prudence of adhering as closely as possible to the language of the original record. The brothers are at first received with sternness and asperity, charged with being spies come to observe the undefended state of the country. This accusation, though not seriously intended, in some degree confirms the notion that the Egyptians had recently suffered, and therefore constantly apprehended, foreign invasion. They are thrown into prison for three days, and released on condition of proving the truth of their story, by bringing their younger brother Benjamin with them. Their own danger brings up before their minds the recollection of their crime. They express to one another their deep remorse for the supposed murder of their elder brother, little thinking that Joseph, who had conversed with them through an interpreter, (perhaps of the caste mentioned by Herodotus,) understood every word they said. *And Joseph turned about from them and wept.* Simeon being left as a hostage, the brothers are dismissed, but on their way they are surprised and alarmed to find their money returned. The suspicious Jacob will not at first entrust his youngest and best-beloved child to their care; but their present supply of corn being consumed, they have no alternative between starvation and their return to Egypt. Jacob reluctantly, and with many fond admonitions, commits the surviving child of Rachel to their protection.

On their arrival in Egypt they are better received, the Vizier inquires anxiously about the health of their father. *Is your father alive, the old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive?* The sight of his own uterine brother, Benjamin, overpowers him with emotion. He said, *God be gracious unto thee, my son; and Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber and wept there.* They are feasted, (and here again we find a genuine trait of Egyptian manners,) Joseph must not eat at the same table with these shepherd strangers. Benjamin is peculiarly distinguished by a larger portion of meat. The brothers are once more dismissed, but are now pursued and apprehended on a charge of secreting a silver cup, which had been concealed in the sack of Benjamin, and at length the great minister of the king of Egypt makes himself known as the brother whom they had sold as a slave. *Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me; and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now there-*



*fore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.* He sends them, with great store of provisions, and with an equipage of waggons to transport their father and all their family into Egypt, for five years of the famine had still to elapse. His last striking admonition is, *See that ye fall not out by the way.* When they arrive in Canaan, and tell their aged father, *Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt, Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.* Convinced at length of the surprising change of fortune, he says, *It is enough Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die.*

Thus all the legitimate descendants of Abraham with their families, amounting in number to seventy, migrate into Egypt. The high credit of Joseph insures them a friendly reception, and the fertile district of Goshen, the best pasture land of Egypt, is assigned by the munificent sovereign for their residence. But if the deadly hostility borne by the native Egyptians to foreign shepherds really originated in the cause which has been indicated above, the magnanimity of Joseph in not disclaiming his connexion with a race in such low esteem, and his influence in obtaining them such hospitable reception, must not escape our notice. Their establishment in Goshen coincides in a remarkable manner with this theory. The last strong hold of the shepherd kings was the city of Abaris. Abaris must have been situated either within or closely



bordering upon the district of Goshen. The expulsion of the shepherds would leave the tract unoccupied, and open for the settlement of another pastoral people. Goshen itself was likewise called Rameses, a word ingeniously explained by Jablonski, as meaning the land of shepherds, and contained all the low, and sometimes marshy meadows which lie on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and extend very considerably to the south. Here, says Maillet, the grass grows to the height of a man, and so thick that an ox may browse a whole day lying on the ground.

Joseph pursued the system of his government with consummate vigour and prudence. His measures, however calculated to raise the royal authority, seem to have been highly popular with all classes of the nation. It is difficult precisely to understand the views or the consequences of the total revolution in the tenure of property, which he effected. During the first years of the dearth, all the money of the country found its way into the royal treasury; in a short time after, all the inhabitants hastened to part with their stock; and at length were glad to purchase subsistence at the price of their lands: thus the whole territory, except that of the priests, was vested in the crown. Whether the common people had any landed property before this period; and whether that triple division of the lands, one-third to the king, for the expenses of the court and government, one-third to the priests, and the other third to the military class, existed previous to this epoch, we have no means of ascertaining. The Mosaic history seems to infer that the body of the people

were the possessors of the soil. If, however, the state of property, described above from Diodorus, was anterior to this period, the financial operation of Joseph consisted in the resumption of the crown lands from the tenants, with the reletting of the whole on one plain and uniform system, and the acquisition of that of the military. In either case, the terms on which the whole was relet, with the reservation of one-fifth to the royal exchequer, seem liberal and advantageous to the cultivator, especially if we compare them with the exactions to which the peasantry in the despotic countries of the East, or the miserable Fellahs who now cultivate the banks of the Nile, are exposed. Another part of Joseph's policy is still more difficult clearly to comprehend, his removing the people into the cities. This has been supposed by some an arbitrary measure, in order to break the ties of attachment, in the former possessors, to their native farms; by others a wise scheme, intended to civilize the rude peasantry. A passage in Belzoni's travels may throw some light on the transaction. He describes the condition of the poor cultivators in Upper Egypt, as wretched and dangerous. Their single tenements or villages are built but just above the ordinary high-water mark, and are only protected by a few wattles. If the Nile rises beyond its usual level, dwellings, cattle, and even the inhabitants are swept away. The measure of Joseph may have been merely intended to secure the improvident peasantry against these common, but fatal accidents.

Among the fertile pastures of Goshen, enjoy-

ing undisturbed plenty and prosperity, the sons of Jacob began to increase with great, but by no means incredible, rapidity. The prolific soil of Egypt not merely increases the fertility of vegetable and animal life, but that of the human race likewise. This fact is noticed by many ancient writers, particularly Aristotle, who states that women in Egypt sometimes produce three, four, or even seven at a birth ! Early marriages, polygamy, the longer duration of life, abundance and cheapness of provisions, would tend, under the divine blessing, still further to promote the population of this flourishing district. At the end of 17 years, Jacob died, aged 147. Before his death he bestowed his last blessing on Joseph, and solemnly adjured him to transfer his remains to the cemetery of the Tribe in Canaan. The history of his life terminates with a splendid poetical prophecy, describing the character of his sons, and the possessions they were to occupy in the partition of the promised land. This poem was no doubt treasured up with the most religious care among the traditions of the tribes. One curious point proves its antiquity. The most splendid destiny is awarded to Judah and the sons of Joseph, but Jacob had never forgotten the barbarity of Simeon and Levi. These two families are condemned to the same inferior and degraded lot, as divided and scattered among their brethren. Yet how different their fate ! The tribe of Levi attained the highest rank among their brethren : scattered indeed they were, but in stations of the first distinction ; while the feeble tribe of Simeon soon dwindled into insignificance, and became

almost extinct. A later poet, certainly Moses himself, would not have united these two tribes under the same destiny. The funeral procession of Jacob was conducted with Egyptian magnificence to the sepulchre of his fathers, to the great and lasting astonishment of the native Canaanites. The protecting presence of their father being withdrawn, the brothers began again to apprehend the hostility of Joseph; but his favour still watched over the growing settlement, and he himself at length, having seen his great grandchildren upon his knees, died at the age of 110 years. He left directions that his body should be embalmed, and put into a coffin; on the return of his kindred to Canaan, to be transported to the grave of his forefathers.

How long a period elapsed \* between the migration into Egypt under Jacob, and the Exodus, or departure, under Moses, has been a question debated from the earliest ages by Jewish, no less than Christian writers. While some assign the whole duration of 430 years to the captivity in Egypt, others include the residence of the patriarchs, 215 years within this period. The vestiges of this controversy appear in all the earlier writings. The Hebrew and Samaritan texts, the different

\* Several curious particulars of this period may be gleaned from the genealogies in the book of Chronicles. Some intercourse with the native country was kept up for a time. Certain sons of Ephraim were slain in a freebooting expedition to drive the cattle of the inhabitants of Gath.—Chron. vii. 21. Another became ruler of the tribe of Moab.—Chron. vii. 22. Some became celebrated in Egypt as potters, and manufacturers in cotton (byssus).—Chron. iv. 21.

copies of the Greek version of the Scriptures, differ. St. Stephen, in the Acts, seems to have followed one opinion; St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, the other. Josephus contradicts himself repeatedly. The great body of English divines follow the latter hypothesis; the great modern scholars of Germany generally prefer the former. The following brief statement may throw some light on this intricate subject. The Jews were firmly and religiously persuaded that their genealogies were not merely accurate but complete. As then only two names appeared between Levi and Moses, those of Kohath and Amram, and the date of life assigned to these two seemed irreconcilable with the longer period of 430 years, they adopted very generally the notion that only 215 years were passed in Egypt.\* They overlooked, or left to miraculous intervention to account for a still greater difficulty, the prodigious increase in one family during one generation. In the desert, the males of the descendants of Kohath are reckoned at 8609. Kohath had four sons; from each son then, in one generation, must have sprung on the average 2150 males. On this hypothesis the alternative remains, either that some names have been lost from the genealogies between Kohath and Amram, or between Amram and Moses, a notion rather confirmed by the fact that, in the genealogy of Joshua in the book of Chronicles, he stands twelfth in descent from Joseph,

\* On account of this uncertainty, we have omitted the dates till the time of the Exodus, when chronology first seems to offer a secure footing.



while Moses is the fourth from Levi ; or, as there are strong grounds for suspecting, some general error runs through the whole numbering\* of the Israelites in the desert.

At what period in Egyptian history the migration under Jacob took place ; and which of the Pharaohs perished in the Red Sea, may possibly come to light from the future investigation of the hieroglyphic monuments by Mons. Champollion. One point appears certain from the Mosaic history, that the patron of Joseph was one of the native sovereigns of Egypt, not, as Eusebius supposed, one of the foreign shepherd dynasty. The flourishing and peaceful state of the kingdom ; the regularity of the government ; the power of the priesthood, who were persecuted and oppressed by the savage shepherds ; the hatred of the pastoral race and occupation ; all these circumstances strongly indicate the orderly and uncontested authority of the native princes.

In process of time, such is the lot of the greatest of public benefactors, the services of the wise and popular Vizier were forgotten. A new king arose,†

\* Some observations on this subject will subsequently be offered.

† The change of dynasty, and accession of the shepherd kings during this interval, is liable to as strong objections, as those above stated. The inroad of this savage people, which must have passed, in all its havoc and massacre, over the land of Goshen, would hardly have been forgotten or omitted in the Hebrew traditions. The great architectural and agricultural works bespeak the reign of the magnificent native princes, not that of rude barbarians. Mr. Faber's ingenious theory, which assigns the building of the pyramids to the shepherds, is, in our opinion, highly improbable.



who knew not Joseph, and began to look with jealous apprehension on this race of strangers, thus occupying his most open and accessible frontier, and able to give free passage, or join in a dangerous confederacy with any foreign invader. With inhuman policy he commenced a system of oppression, intended at once to check their increase, and break the dangerous spirit of revolt. They were seized, and forced to labour at the public works in building new cities, Pithom and Raamses,\* called treasure cities. Josephus employs them on the pyramids, on the great canals, and on vast dams built for the purpose of irrigation. But tyranny, short-sighted as inhuman, failed in its purpose. Even under these unfavourable circumstances, the strangers still increased. In the damp stone-quarry, in the lime-pit and brick-field, toiling beneath burthens under a parching sun, they multiplied as rapidly as among the fresh airs and under the cool tents in Goshen; and now instead of a separate tribe, inhabiting a remote province, whose loyalty was only suspected, the government found a still more numerous people, spread throughout the country, and rendered hostile by cruel oppression. Tyranny having thus wantonly made enemies, must resort to more barbarous measures to repress them. A dreadful decree is issued; the midwives, who in this land of hereditary professions, were most likely a distinct class under responsible officers, were commanded to

\* It is curious that Mons. Champollion assigns to this period, a king called Rhamses Mei-Amoun. Rhamses, however, was not an uncommon name in the Egyptian dynasties.

destroy all the Hebrew children at their birth. They disobey or evade the command, and the king has now no alternative, but to take into his own hands the execution of his exterminating project, which, if carried into effect, would have cut short at once the race of Abraham. Every male child is commanded to be cast into the river, the females preserved, probably to fill in time the harems of their oppressors.

But Divine Providence had determined to raise up that man, who was to release this oppressed people, and after having seen and intimately known the civil and religious institutions of this famous country, was deliberately to reject them, to found a polity on totally different principles, and establish a religion the most opposite to the mysterious polytheism of Egypt,—a polity and a religion which were to survive the dynasty of the Pharaohs, and the deities of their vast temples, and exercise an unbounded influence on the civil and religious history of the most remote ages. Amram, if the genealogies are complete, the second in descent from Levi, married in his own tribe. His wife bore him a son, whose birth she was so fortunate as to conceal for three months, but at the end of this period she was obliged to choose between the dreadful alternative of exposing the infant on the banks of the river, or of surrendering him to the executioners of the king's relentless edict. The manner in which the child in its cradle of rushes, lined with pitch, was laid among the flags upon the brink of the river, forcibly recalls the exposure of the Indian children on the banks of the holy Ganges. Could there be any similar custom among

the Egyptians, and might the mother hope, that if any unforeseen accident should save the life of the child, it might pass for that of an Egyptian? This however was not the case. The daughter of the king, coming down to bathe in the river, perceived the ark, and, attracted by the beauty of the infant, took pity on it, and conjecturing that it belonged to one of the persecuted Hebrews, determined to preserve its life. By a simple and innocent stratagem, the mother was summoned, her own child committed to her charge, and, as it grew up, it became the adopted son of the princess, who called it Moses, from Egyptian words signifying, drawn from the water. The child received an excellent education and became trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This last fact rests on Jewish traditions reported by St. Stephen, but it is highly curious to contrast the other romantic fictions of the later writers, probably the Alexandrian Jews, with this plain narrative. These fables have no appearance of ancient traditions, but all the exaggeration of Rabbinical invention. The birth of Moses was prophetically foreshown. The sacred scribe announced to the king, that a child was about to be born among the Israelites, who was to bring ruin on the power of Egypt, and unexampled glory on the Hebrew nation : he was to surpass all the human race in the greatness and duration of his fame. To cut short this fatal life, not with the design of weakening the Jewish people, this elder Herod issues out his edict for the first massacre of the Innocents. Amram, the father of Moses, is likewise favoured with a vision, foretelling the glory of his son. Thermutis, the daughter of Pharaoh (the manners having become

too refined to suppose that a king's daughter would bathe in the river) is more elegantly described as amusing herself on the banks. Seeing the basket floating on the water, she orders certain divers, ready of course at her command, to bring it to her. Enchanted by the exquisite beauty of the child, she sends for a nurse : but the infant patriot indignantly refuses the milk of an Egyptian : nurse after nurse is tried and rejected ; nothing will satisfy him but the breast of his own mother. When he was three years old, he was such a prodigy of beauty, that all who passed by, would suspend their work to gaze upon him. The princess adopts him, shows him to her father, and insists on his being recognized heir to the kingdom. The king places the diadem on his head, which the child contemptuously seizes and tramples under his feet. The royal scribe in vain attempts to awaken the apprehensions of the monarch. The youth grows up in such universal esteem and favour, that when the Ethiopians invade the country, he is placed at the head of the army. The district through which he chooses to march, rather than ascend the Nile, being full of noxious reptiles, he presses a squadron of tame ibises, lets them fly at the serpents, and thus speedily clears his way. By this extraordinary stratagem, he comes unexpectedly upon the enemy, defeats and pursues them to their capital city, Meroe. Here the daughter of the king falls in love with him, and the city is surrendered on condition of his marrying the Ethiopian princess ; a fiction obviously formed on the Cushite or Arabian (translated, in the LXX, Ethiopian) wife of Moses. Jealousy and hatred, the usual attendants on greatness, en-

danger his life ; the priests urge, and the timid king assents to the death of the stranger, who with difficulty makes his escape into the desert. But, as is usual with those who embellish genuine history, the simple dignity of the Jewish patriot is lowered, rather than exalted. The true greatness of Moses consists in his generous indignation at the oppressions under which his kindred were labouring ; his single-minded attachment to the poor and degraded and toil-worn slaves from whom sprung ; his deliberate rejection of all the power, wealth, and rank which awaited him if he had forsworn his race, and joined himself to the people who had adopted him. An accident discovered his impatience of the sufferings inflicted on his brethren. As he saw them labouring under their burthens, he perceived one of the Egyptian officers (such is the probable supposition of a late writer) exercising some great personal cruelty on one of the miserable slaves under his inspection. He rose up in defence of his countryman, slew the officer, and hid his body in the sand. No Egyptian had witnessed what he had done, and on the fidelity of his brethren he supposed that he might fairly calculate. The next day, when he took upon himself the office of reconciling two of the Israelites, who had accidentally quarrelled, he found that his secret was not safe. The whole transaction certainly gives ground for the supposition, that an unformed notion of delivering his countrymen from their bondage was already brooding in the mind of Moses\*. His courage in avenging

\* Compare Acts vii., 23—25.



their wrongs, and his anxiety to establish goodwill and unity among the people, were the surest means he could adopt to secure confidence, and consolidate their strength. If this were the case, the conduct of his countrymen, ready to betray him on every occasion in which their passions or fears were excited, instead of encouraging, was likely to crush for ever his ambitious hopes, and sadly convince him that such a design, however noble, was desperate and impracticable. At all events he had been guilty of a crime, by the Egyptian law of the most enormous magnitude; even if his favour at the court might secure him from the worst consequences of the unpardonable guilt of bloodshed, the example of revolt and insurrection precluded all hope of indulgence.

A lonely exile, Moses flies beyond the reach of Egyptian power, to the tents of the nomadic tribes which lie on the borders of Palestine and Arabia. Here for forty years the future lawgiver of the Jews follows the humble occupation of a shepherd; allied in marriage with the hospitable race who had received him, he sees his children rising around him, and seems as entirely to have forgotten his countrymen and their oppression, as, in all probability, he was forgotten by them; so entirely did he seem alienated from his own people, that he had neglected to initiate his children into the family of Abraham, by the great national rite of circumcision. On a sudden, when eighty years old, an age which, according to the present proportion of life, may be fairly reckoned at sixty or sixty-five, when the fire of ambition is usually burnt out, and the active spirit of adventure subsided,



entirely unattended, he appears again in Egypt, and either renews, or first boldly undertakes the extraordinary enterprize of delivering the people of Israel from their state of slavery, and establishing them as a regular and independent commonwealth. To effect this, he had first to obtain a perfect command over the minds of the people, now scattered through the whole land of Egypt, their courage broken by long and unintermitted slavery, habituated to Egyptian customs, and even deeply tainted with Egyptian superstitions; he had to induce them to throw off the yoke of their tyrannical masters, and follow him in search of a remote land, only known by traditions many centuries old, as the residence of their forefathers. Secondly, he had to overawe, and induce to the surrender of their whole useful slave population, not merely an ignorant and superstitious people, but the king and the priesthood of a country where science had made considerable progress, and where the arts of an impostor would either be counteracted by similar arts, or instantly detected, and exposed to shame and ridicule.

What, then, were his natural qualifications for this prodigious undertaking—popular eloquence? By his own account, his organs of speech were imperfect, his enunciation slow and impeded; he was obliged to use the cold and ineffective method of addressing the people through his more ready and fluent brother Aaron. Had he acquired among the tribes, with whom he had resided, the adventurous spirit and military skill which might prompt or carry him through such an enterprize? The shepherds, among whom he lived, seem to have

been a peaceful and unenterprising people ; and, far from showing any skill as a warrior, the generalship of the troops always devolved on the younger and more warlike Joshua. His only distinguished acquirements were those which he had learned among the people with whom he was about to enter on this extraordinary contest ; all the wisdom he possessed was the wisdom of the Egyptians.

The credentials which Moses produced in order to obtain authority over his own people, and the means of success on which he calculated, in his bold design of wresting these miserable Helots from their unwilling masters, were a direct commission from the God of their fathers, and a power of working preternatural wonders. His narrative was simple and imposing. The Sea of Edom, or the Red Sea, terminates in two narrow gulfs, the western running up to the modern Isthmus of Suez, the eastern extending not quite so far to the north. In the mountainous district between these two forks of the sea, stands a remarkable eminence with two peaks, higher than the neighbouring ridge, the south-eastern, which is much the loftiest, called Sinai ; the north-western, Horeb. Into these solitudes Moses had driven his flocks, when suddenly he beheld a bush kindling into flame, yet remaining unconsumed. A voice was next heard, which announced the presence of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and declared the compassion of the Almighty towards the suffering race of Israel, their approaching deliverance, their restoration to the rich and fruitful land of Canaan ; designated Moses as the man who was

to accomplish this great undertaking, and ended by communicating that mysterious name of the great Deity which implies, in its few pregnant monosyllables, self-existence and eternity. "I am that I am." Moses, diffident of his own capacity to conduct so great an enterprize, betrayed his reluctance. Two separate miracles, the transformation of his rod or shepherd's staff into a serpent, the immediate withering of his hand with leprosy, and its as immediate restoration; the promise of power to effect a third, the change of water into blood, inspired him with courage and resolution to set forth on his appointed task. Such was his relation before the elders of the people; for even in their bondage this sort of government by the heads of families seems to have been retained among the descendants of Jacob. Aaron, his brother, who had gone forth by divine command, as he declared, to meet him, enters boldly into the design. The people are awed by the signs, which are displayed, and yield their passive consent. This is all that Moses requires; for while he promises deliverance, he does not insist on any active co-operation on their part; he enjoins neither courage, discipline, enterprize, nor mutual confidence; nothing which might render insurrection formidable, or indicate an organized plan of resistance.

The kings of Egypt probably held that sort of open court or divan, usual in oriental monarchies, in which any one may appear who would claim justice or petition for favour. Moses and Aaron stand before this throne, and solicit the temporary release of all their people, that they may offer

sacrifice to their God. The haughty monarch not only rejects their demand, but sternly rebukes the presumptuous interference of these self-constituted leaders. The labours of the slaves are redoubled; they are commanded not merely to finish the same portion of work in the brick-field, but to provide themselves with straw; they are treated with still greater inhumanity, and severely chastised because they cannot accomplish the impracticable orders of their taskmasters. The wretched people charge the aggravation of their miseries on Moses and Aaron, whose influence, instead of increasing, rapidly declines, and gives place to aversion and bitter reproaches. Yet the deliverers neither lose their courage, nor depart from their lofty assurance of success. The God of their fathers assumes that ineffable name, Jehovah (the Faithful and Unchangeable), which the Jews dare not pronounce. That release which they cannot obtain by the fair means of persuasion, Moses and Aaron assert that they will extort by force from the reluctant king. Again they appear in the royal presence, having announced, it should seem, their pretensions to miraculous powers; and now commenced a contest, unequal it would at first appear, between two individuals of an enslaved people, and the whole skill, knowledge, or artifice of the Egyptian priesthood, whose sacred authority was universally acknowledged; their intimate acquaintance with all the secrets of nature extensive; their reputation for magical powers firmly established with the vulgar. The names of the principal opponents of Moses, Jannes and Jambres, are reported by St. Paul from Jewish traditions; and it is curious

that in Pliny and Apuleius the names of Moses and Jannes are recorded as celebrated proficient in magical arts.

The contest began in the presence of the king. Aaron cast down his rod, which was instantaneously transformed into a serpent. The magicians performed the same feat. The dexterous tricks which the eastern and African jugglers play with serpents will easily account for this without any supernatural assistance. It might be done, either by adroitly substituting the serpent for the rod; or by causing the serpent to assume a stiff appearance like a rod or staff, which being cast down on the ground might become again pliant and animated. But Aaron's serpent swallowed up the rest—a circumstance, however extraordinary, yet not likely to work conviction upon a people familiar with such feats, which they ascribed to magic. Still, the slaves had now assumed courage, their demands were more peremptory, their wonders more general and public. The plagues of Egypt, which successively afflicted the priesthood, the king, and almost every deity honoured in their comprehensive pantheon,—which infected every element, and rose in terrific gradation, one above the other, now began. Pharaoh was standing on the brink of the sacred river, the great object of Egyptian adoration, not improbably in the performance of some ceremonial ablution, or making an offering to the native deity of the land. The leaders of the Israelites approached, and, in the name of the Lord God of the Hebrews, renewed their demand for freedom. It was rejected; and at once the holy river, with all the



waters of the land, were turned to blood. The fish, many of which were objects of divine worship, perished. But the priesthood were not yet baffled. The Egyptians having dug for fresh and pure water, in some of these artificial tanks or reservoirs, the magicians contrived to effect a similar change. As their holy abhorrence of blood would probably prevent them from discharging so impure a fluid into the new reservoirs, they might, without great difficulty, produce the appearance by some secret and chemical means. The waters of the Nile, it is well known, about their period of increase, usually assume a red tinge, either from the colour of the Ethiopian soil, which is washed down, or from a number of insects of that colour. Writers, who endeavour to account for these miracles by natural means, suppose that Moses took the opportunity of this periodical change to terrify the superstitious Egyptians. Yet, that Moses should place any reliance on, or the Egyptians feel the least apprehension at, an ordinary occurrence, which took place every year, seems little less incredible than the miracle itself. For seven days the god of the river was thus rebuked before the God of the stranger: instead of the soft and delicious water, spoken of by travellers as peculiarly grateful to the taste, the foetid stream ran with that of which the Egyptians had the greatest abhorrence. To shed, or even to behold blood, was repugnant to all their feelings and prejudices. Still the king was inflexible, and from the sacred stream was derived the second plague. The whole land was suddenly covered with frogs. The houses, the chambers, even the places where they prepared



their food, swarmed with these loathsome reptiles. It is undoubtedly possible that the corrupted waters might quicken the birth of these creatures, the spawn of which abounded in all the marshy and irrigated districts. Hence the priests would have no difficulty in bringing them forth in considerable numbers. The sudden cessation of this mischief at the prayer of Moses is by far the most extraordinary part of this transaction,—in one day all the frogs, except those in the river, were destroyed. So far the contest had been maintained without manifest advantage on either side. But the next plague reduced the antagonists of Moses to a more difficult predicament. With the priesthood the most scrupulous cleanliness was inseparable from their sanctity. These Bramins of Egypt, so fastidiously abhorrent of every kind of personal impurity that they shaved every part which might possibly harbour vermin, practised ablutions four times a-day, and wore no garments but of the finest linen, because woollen might conceal either filth or insects, heard with the greatest horror that the dirt had been changed into lice, and that this same vermin, thus called into existence, was spreading over the whole country. After a vain attempt, notwithstanding their prejudices, to imitate their opponent, they withdrew for the present from the contest. But the pride of the king was not yet broken, and the plagues followed in rapid and dreadful succession. Swarms of flies, or rather musquitoes, in unusual numbers, covered the whole land: by the intercession of Moses they were dispersed. Next, all the cattle, of every description, were smitten with a destructive murrain,

all but those of the Israelites, who were exempt from this, as from the former calamity. This last blow might seem to strike not merely at the wealth, but at an important part of the religion of Egypt—their animal worship. The goat worshipped at Mendes, the ram at Thebes, the more general deity, the bull Apis, were perhaps involved in the universal destruction. Still this is by no means certain, as the plague seems to have fallen only on the animals which were in the open pastures; it is clear that the war-horses escaped. If this plague reached the deities, the next was aimed at the sacred persons of the priesthood, no less than at the meaner people. Moses took the ashes of the furnace, perhaps the brick-kiln in which the wretched slaves were labouring, cast them into the air, and where they fell, the skin broke out in boils. The magicians, in terror and bodily anguish, fled away. It is impossible to read the following passage from Plutarch without observing so remarkable a coincidence between the significant action of Moses and the Egyptian rite, as to leave little doubt that some allusion was intended. “In the city of Eilithuia,” as Manetho relates, calling them Typhonian (as sacrificed to Typhon), “they burned men alive, and, winnowing their ashes, scattered them in the air and dispersed them.” The usual objects of these sacrifices were people with red hair, doubtless their old enemies the Shepherds. Had any of the Israelites suffered in these horrid furnaces, it would add singular force and justice to the punishment inflicted on the priests and people. It would thus have been from the ashes of their own victims that their skins were

burning with insufferable agony, and breaking out into loathsome disease. The next plague, though in most tropical climates it would have been an ordinary occurrence, in Egypt was an event as unusual as alarming. All ancient and modern writers agree, that rain, though by no means unknown, falls but seldom in that country. It appears to be rather less uncommon now than formerly. According to Herodotus it rained once at Thebes, and the circumstance excited general apprehension. "There, at present," says Belzoni, "two or three days of moderate rain generally occur during the winter." But lower down, in the part of the valley where these events took place, it is still an uncommon, though not an unprecedented phenomenon. Hasselquist speaks of rain at Alexandria, and in other parts of the Delta: Pocock saw even hail at Faiume. Ordinarily, however, the Nile, with its periodical overflow and constant exhalations, supplies the want of the cool and refreshing shower. Now, according to the prediction of Moses, a tremendous tempest burst over the country. Thunder and hail, and fire mingled with the hail, "that ran upon the ground," rent the branches from the trees, and laid prostrate the whole harvest. From the cultivation of flax, Egypt possessed the great linen manufacture of the ancient world; on the barley the common people depended for their usual drink, the rich soil of Egypt in general being unfit for the vine. Both these crops were totally destroyed. The rye and the wheat, being later, escaped. This tempest must, therefore, have taken place at the beginning of March. By this time the inflexible obstinacy of the king began

to fail ; on the deliverance of the country from this dreadful visitation, he engaged to release the bondsmen. At the word of Moses the storm ceased. Still, to deprive the whole land of so valuable a body of slaves seemed too great a sacrifice to the policy, and too humiliating a concession to the pride of the monarch. To complete the desolation of the country, the corn lands were next laid waste by other means of destruction. The situation of Egypt usually secures the country from that worst enemy to the fertility of the Asiatic provinces, the locusts. As these insects fly in general from east to west, and cannot remain on the wing for any length of time, the width of the Red Sea presents a secure barrier to their invasions. Their dreadful ravage is scarcely exaggerated by the strong images of the prophets, particularly the sublime description in Joel. Where they alight, all vegetation at once disappears ; not a blade of grass, not a leaf escapes them ; the soil seems as if it were burnt up by fire ; they obscure the sun as with a cloud ; they cover sometimes a space of nine miles, and thus they march on in their regular files till “ *the land which was as the garden of Eden before them, behind them is a desolate wilderness.*” Such was the next visitation which came to glean the few remaining signs of the accustomed abundance of Egypt, spared by the tempest. A strong and regular east wind brought the fatal cloud from the Arabian shore, or, according to the Septuagint translation, a south wind from the regions of Abyssinia. The court now began to murmur at the unbending spirit of the king ; on the intimation of this new calamity, he

had determined to come to terms. He offered to permit all the adults to depart, but insisted on retaining the children, either as hostages for the return of the parents, or in order to perpetuate a race of slaves for the future. Now he was for an instant inclined to yield this point; but when the west wind had driven these destroying ravagers into the sea, he recalled all his concessions, and continued steadfast in his former resolutions of resistance to the utmost. At length, therefore, their great divinity, the Sun, was to be put to shame before the God of the slave and the stranger. For three whole days, as Moses stretched his hand towards heaven, a darkness, described with unexampled force as a DARKNESS THAT MIGHT BE FELT, overspread the land; not merely was the sun unable to penetrate the gloom and enlighten his favoured land, but they could distinguish nothing, and were constrained to sit in awe-struck inactivity. The king would now gladly consent to the departure of the whole race, children as well as grown-up men; yet, as all the latter plagues, the flies, the murrain, the hail, the locusts, the darkness had spared the land of Goshen, the cattle of that district, in the exhausted state of the country, was invaluable; he demands that these should be surrendered as the price of freedom. "Our cattle, also, shall go with us, not a hoof shall be left behind," replies his inexorable antagonist. Thus, then, the whole kingdom of Egypt had been laid waste by successive calamities; the cruelty of the oppressors had been dreadfully avenged; all classes had suffered in the indiscriminating desolation. Their pride had been hum-



bled ; their most sacred prejudices wounded ; the Nile had been contaminated ; their dwellings polluted by loathsome reptiles ; their cleanly persons defiled by vermin ; their pure air had swarmed with troublesome insects ; their cattle had perished by a dreadful malady ; their bodies broken out with a filthy disease ; their early harvest had been destroyed by the hail, the later by the locusts ; an awful darkness had enveloped them for three days, but still the deliverance was to be extorted by a calamity more dreadful than all these. The Israelites will not depart poor and empty-handed ; they will receive some compensation for their years of hard and cruel servitude ; they levy on their awe-struck masters contributions in gold, silver, and jewels. Some, especially later writers, have supposed that they exacted these gifts by main force, and with arms in their hands. Undoubtedly, though the Israelites appear to have offered no resistance to the Egyptian horsemen and chariots which pursued them in the desert, they fight with the Amalekites, and afterwards arrive an armed people on the borders of Canaan. Josephus accounts for this, but not quite satisfactorily, by supposing that they got possession of the arms of the Egyptians, washed ashore after their destruction in the Red Sea. But the general awe and confusion are sufficient to explain the facility with which the Israelites collected these treasures. The slaves had become objects of superstitious terror ; to propitiate them with gifts was natural, and their leader authorized their reception of all presents which might thus be offered. The night drew on, the last night of ser-



vitute to the people of Israel, a night of unprecedented horror to the ancient kingdom of Egypt. The Hebrews were employed in celebrating that remarkable rite, which they have observed for ages down to the present day. The passover, the memorial that God passed over them when he destroyed the first-born of all Egypt, has been kept under this significant name, and still is kept as the memorial of their deliverance from Egypt by every faithful descendant of Abraham. Each family was to sacrifice a lamb without blemish, to anoint their door-posts and the lintels of their houses with its blood, and to feast upon the remainder. The sacrifice was over, the feast concluded, when that dreadful event took place, which it would be presumptuous profanation to relate except in the words of the Hebrew annalist: "*And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.*" The horrors of this night may be better conceived, when we call to mind that the Egyptians were noted for the wild and frantic wailings with which they lamented their dead. Screaming women rush about with dishevelled hair, troops of people assemble in tumultuous commiseration around the house where a single corpse is laid out—and now every house and every family had its victim. Hebrew tradition has increased the horror of the cala-

mity, asserting that the temples were shaken, the idols overthrown, the sacred animals, chosen as the first-born, involved in the universal destruction. While every household of Egypt was occupied in its share of the general calamity, the people of Israel, probably drawn together during the suspension of all labour, caused by the former calamities, or assembled in Goshen to celebrate the new national festival; already organized by a sort of discipline among the separate tribes; with all their flocks and herds, with sufficient provisions for an immediate supply, and with the booty they had extorted from their masters, stood prepared, as one man, for the signal of departure. During the night, the permission, or rather intreaty, that they would instantly evacuate the country, arrived, yet no one stirred before the morning, perhaps apprehensive lest the slaughter should be attributed to them, or in religious fear of encountering the angel of destruction. The Egyptians became only anxious to accelerate their departure; and thus the Hebrew people set forth to seek a land of freedom, bearing with them the bones of their great ancestor, Joseph. Their numbers, not reckoning the strangers who followed them, most of whom probably fell off during the march, amounted to 600,000 adult males, which, according to the usual calculations, would give the total sum of the people at 2,500,000 or 3,000,000.\* From the point of reunion, at which the several bodies had collected, Rameses, probably another name for Goshen,

\* The question of the numbers will be discussed in a future note.

the borders of Canaan might have been reached, even by so great a multitude, in a few weeks. Two routes led to Canaan ; one northward, near the sea, but this was occupied by the Philistines, a very warlike people, with whom the Israelites were not yet sufficiently disciplined to contest their passage. The other passed immediately round the head of the western branch of the Red Sea, coming upon part of the modern track of the caravans from Cairo to Suez. Their first march was to Succoth, originally a place of tents, and which probably afterwards grew up into a village. Josephus considers it the same with Latopolis. From Succoth they advanced to Etham, by some supposed to be a castle or small town at the extreme point of the Red Sea, by Jablonski derived with great probability from an Egyptian word signifying the termination of the sea. Here they were on the borders of the desert ; should they once advance to any distance in that sandy and barren region, they were safe from pursuit ; the chariots of Egypt, or even the horsemen, would scarcely follow them far on a track only suited for the camel, and where the want of water, the fountains being already consumed by the flying enemy, would effectually delay the advance of a large army. On a sudden the march of the Israelites is altered ; instead of pressing rapidly onwards, keeping the sea on their right hand, and so heading the gulph, they strike to the south, with the sea on their left, and deliberately encamp at no great distance from the shore, at a place called Pi-hahiroth, explained by some, the mouth or opening into the mountains. This, however, as well as much more learned etymology,

by which the site of Migdol and Baalzephon, as well as Pi-hahiroth, has been fixed, must be considered very uncertain. The king, recovered from his panic, and receiving intelligence that the Israelites had no thoughts of return, determined on pursuit : intelligence of this false movement, or at least of this unnecessary delay on the part of the Israelites, encouraged his hopes of vengeance. The great caste of the warriors, the second in dignity, were regularly quartered in certain cities on the different frontiers of the kingdom, so that a considerable force could be mustered on any emergency. With great rapidity he drew together 600 war chariots, and a multitude of others, with their full equipment of officers. In the utmost dismay the Israelites beheld the plain behind them glittering with the hostile array ; before them lay the sea ; on the right, impracticable passes. Resistance does not seem to have entered their thoughts ; they were utterly ignorant of military discipline, perhaps unarmed, and encumbered with their families, and their flocks and herds. *Because there were no graves in Egypt*, they exclaimed, in the bitterness of their despair, *hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness ?* Their leader alone preserved his calmness and self-possession, and an unexpected incident gave temporary relief to their apprehensions. A remarkable pillar, of cloud by day, and fire by night, had preceded their march ; it now suddenly shifts its position, and stations itself in the rear so as to conceal their movements from the enemy, showing the dark side to them, while the bright one gave light to the Hebrew camp. But this could not avail them long ; they

could hear, at still diminishing distance, the noise of the advancing chariots, and the cries of vengeance from the infuriated Egyptians. On a sudden Moses advances towards the sea, extends his rod, and a violent wind from the east begins to blow. The waters recede on both sides, a way appears; at nightfall, probably about eight o'clock, the caravan begins to defile along this awful pass. The wind continued in the same quarter all the night; but immediately they had passed over, and while the Egyptians, madly plunging after them, were in the middle of the passage, the wind as suddenly fell, the waters rushed back into their bed, the heavy chariot-wheels of the pursuers sank into the sand, broke and overthrew the chariots, and in this state of confusion the sea swept over the whole host, and overwhelmed the king and all the flower of the Egyptian army. Such is the narrative of Moses, which writers of all ages have examined, and, according to the bias of their minds, have acknowledged or denied the miraculous agency, increased or diminished its extent. At an early period, historians (particularly in Egypt) hostile to the Jews, asserted that Moses, well acquainted with the tides of the Red Sea, took advantage of the ebb, and passed over his army, while the incautious Egyptians, attempting to follow, were surprised by the flood, and perished. Yet, after every concession, it seems quite evident that, without one particular wind, the ebb tide, even in the narrowest part of the channel, could not be kept back long enough to allow a number of people to cross in safety. We have, then, the alternative of supposing, that a man of the con-



summate prudence and sagacity, and the local knowledge, attributed to Moses, altered, suspended, or at least did not hasten his march, and thus deliberately involved the people, whom he had rescued at so much pains and risk, in the danger of being overtaken by the enemy, led back as slaves, or massacred, on the chance that an unusually strong wind would blow at a particular hour, for a given time, so as to keep back the flood, then die away, and allow the tide to return at the precise instant when the Egyptians were in the middle of their passage.

Different opinions, as to the place where the passage was effected, have likewise been supported with ingenuity and research. The one carries the Israelites nearly seventy miles down the western shore of the sea, to Bedea, where it is said that an inlet, now dry, ran up a defile in the mountains; that in this defile, the opening of which was the Pi-hahiroth of Moses, and which ended in this inlet of the sea, called, according to the advocates of this hypothesis, Clusma, the Israelites were caught as in what is commonly called a cul-de-sac. Here, however, the sea is nearly twelve miles broad, and the time is insufficient to allow so great a multitude to pass over, particularly if they did not, as some Jewish writers suppose, send their families and cattle round the head of the gulf. The other hypothesis rests chiefly on the authority of the Danish traveller, Niebuhr, who had investigated the question on the spot. He supposes that the passage was effected near the modern Suez, which occupies the site of an old castle, called by the Arabians al Kolsum, a name apparently



derived from the Greek *Klusma*. Here Niebuhr himself forded the sea, which is about two miles across ; but he asserts confidently that the channel must formerly have been much deeper, and that the gulf extended much farther to the north, than at present. The intelligent Burckhardt adopts the views of Niebuhr. Here, besides that the sea is so much narrower, the bottom is flat and sandy ; lower down it is full of sharp coral rocks, and sea-weed in such large quantities, that the whole gulf is called by a name, *Al Souf*, which signifies the weedy sea. Still, wherever the passage was effected, the Mosaic account cannot, by any fair interpretation, be made consistent with the exclusion of preternatural agency. Not to urge the literal meaning of the waters being a wall on the right hand and on the left, as if they had stood up sheer and abrupt, and then fallen back again,—the Israelites passed through the sea, with deep water on both sides ; and any ford between two bodies of water must have been passable only for a few people at one precise point of time. All comparisons, therefore, to marches like that of Alexander, cited by Josephus idly, and in his worst spirit of compromise, are entirely inapplicable. That bold general took the opportunity of the receding tide to conduct his army round a bluff headland in Pamphylia, called Climax, where, during high water, there was no beach between the cliffs and the sea. But what would this, or any other equally daring measures in the history of war, be to the generalship of Moses, who must thus have decoyed his enemy to pursue him to the banks of the sea, and so nicely calculated the time,

that the lowest ebb should be exactly at the hour of his greatest danger, while the whole of the pursuing army should be so infatuated, and so ignorant of the tides, as to follow them without any apprehension of the returning flood? In this case Moses would appear as formidable a rival to the military fame of Alexander, as to the legislative wisdom of Solon or Lycurgus.

This great event was not only preserved in the annals of the Jewish people; it was likewise, as might be expected, the great subject of their national poetry. But none of their later bards surpassed, or perhaps equalled, the hymn which Moses, their bard, as well as their leader and law-giver, composed on the instant of their deliverance, and which was solemnly chaunted to the music of the timbrel. What is the Roman arch of triumph, or the pillar crowded with sculpture, compared, as a memorial, to the Hebrew song of victory, which, having survived so many ages, is still fresh and vivid as ever; and excites the same emotions of awe and piety, in every human breast susceptible of such feelings, which it did so many ages past in those of the triumphant children of Israel?

Local traditions have retained the remembrance of the same memorable catastrophe, if not with equal accuracy, with equal fidelity. The superstitious Arabs still call fountains or wells by the names of Moses and Pharaoh. The whole coast is looked on with awe. Wherever, says Niebuhr, you ask an Arab where the Egyptians were drowned, he points to the part of the shore where you are standing. There is one bay, however, where in the roaring of the waters they pretend to hear

the cries and wailings of the ghosts of Pharaoh's army. If these were mere modern notions, they would be of little value; but Diodorus Siculus states as a tradition derived by the Ichthyophagi (the people who live on fish), from their remote forefathers, that once an extraordinary reflux took place, the channel of the gulf became dry, the green bottom appearing, and the whole body of water rolling away in an opposite direction. After the dry land in the deepest part had been seen, an extraordinary flood-tide came in, and restored the whole channel to its former state.

The history of the Jewish Exodus, or deliverance from Egypt, under the direction of Moses, was undoubtedly preserved in the Egyptian records, and from thence was derived the strange and disfigured story which we read in Diodorus, Strabo, Justin, and Tacitus. Unfortunately, the ancient enmity between the Egyptian and Hebrew people was kept alive by the civil, religious, and literary dissensions and jealousies under the reign of the Ptolemies in Alexandria. Josephus, in his treatise against Apion, has extracted the contradictory accounts of his ancestors, from three Egyptian historians, Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus. In each of these there is the same attempt to identify or connect the Jews with the earlier shepherd kings, the objects of peculiar detestation to the Egyptian people. So much is their history interwoven, that some learned writers, doubtless Josephus himself, considered the whole account of the fierce and conquering shepherds a fable, built on the history of the Israelites. He states, though in somewhat ambiguous terms, that in another copy of Manetho the word Hyksos,

usually translated shepherd-kings, was also rendered shepherd captives. Yet the Egyptian monuments seem conclusively to prove the existence of this distinct and savage race of conquerors. In other points the Egyptian accounts are equally contradictory ; they confound or associate together at one time Osarsiph (Joseph) and Moses. All agree in describing the Jews as a people of lepers—a disease to which, notwithstanding the indignation of Josephus, they were in all likelihood very subject. The wise precautions of the Lawgiver against the malady prove its prevalence. Quarantine laws are only strictly enforced where there is great danger of the plague.

There are other points of Jewish history where their ignorance or misrepresentation is unquestionable. They ascribe to Moses, or even to the earlier shepherds, the foundation of Jerusalem and its temple. The testimony of the Jews, unsuspecting at least on this point, shows that they were not in possession of Jerusalem till the reign of David, and that down to that period it was nothing more than a hill-fort inhabited by the Canaanites. In short, the whole history betrays the controversialist of a much later period, working on materials so obscure and imperfect, as easily to be disfigured and distorted by national animosity. Still these traditions are not without their value ; they confirm the plain leading facts of the Mosaic narrative, the residence of the Hebrews in Egypt, their departure under the guidance of Moses, and the connexion of that departure with some signal calamity, at least for a time, fatal to the power and humiliating to the pride of Egypt.







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## BOOK III.

### THE DESERT.

*The March—Mount Sinai—Delivery of the Law—The  
Tabernacle—The Law.*



THUS free and triumphant, the whole people of Israel set forth upon their pilgrimage towards the promised land—a land described, in the most glowing language, as flowing with milk and honey. But at present an arid and thirsty desert lay before them, long levels of sand or uneven stony ground broken by barren ridges of rugged mountains, with here and there a green spot where a few palm-trees overshadowed a spring of running water. Extraordinary as it may seem, we can almost trace their march, at least in its earlier stations; for while the face of cultivated countries and the manners of civilised nations are in a perpetual state of change, the desert and its inhabitants are alike unalterable. The same wild clans pitch their tents in the same valleys, where waters, which neither fail nor increase, give nourishment to about the same extent of vegetation. After three days' march through the wilderness of Shur, the Israelites reached the well of Marah, but here a grievous disappointment awaited them. As they rushed to slake their burning lips in the stream, they found it, unlike the soft and genial waters of the Nile, so bitter that it could not be drank. From Ajoun Mousa (the wells of Moses), near that part of the sea where Niebuhr supposes that the passage was made, the observant and accurate Burckhardt travelled in 15 hours and a quarter (a good three days' march for a whole people like the Israelites),

to a well called Howara, "the water of which is so bitter, that men cannot drink it; and even camels, if not very thirsty, refuse to taste it." The spring was sweetened by the branch of a tree, which Moses, by divine direction, cast into it—whether from the natural virtue of the plant seems uncertain. A plant with this property is indicated in the papers of Forskal, who travelled with Niebuhr as botanist, and is said to be known in the East Indies. Burckhardt suggests the berry of the Gharkad, a shrub which grows in the neighbourhood.\* From hence the caravan passed on to Elim, which all travellers place in the valley of Girondel or Gharondel. Here they rested under the shade of seventy palm-trees, with twelve springs of water bubbling up around them. Nine out of the twelve wells still remain, and the palm-trees have spread out into a beautiful grove. The natives pointed out to Shaw a spot called Hummun Mousa, where the household of Moses are said to have pitched their tents. In this delightful resting-

\* Since the publication of the first edition, some water from a fountain, called that of Marah, but probably not the Howara of Burckhardt, has been brought to this country, and has been analysed by a medical friend of the author. His statement is subjoined: "The water has a slightly astringent bitterish taste. Chemical examination shows that these qualities are derived from the selenite or sulphate of lime, which it holds in solution, and which is said to abound in the neighbourhood. If, therefore, any vegetable substance containing oxalic acid (of which there are several instances) were thrown into it, the lime would speedily be precipitated, and the beverage rendered agreeable and wholesome. The quantity of acid requisite for this purpose must be inconsiderable, as a pint of water, at its summer temperature in England, is scarcely capable of dissolving twenty grains of the selenite."

place, the nation reposed for a month ; and then set forth again, not in the direction of Palestine, but towards that mysterious mountain where the Almighty had first made himself known to Moses. Their route lay at no great distance from the sea ; several of the valleys, which it crossed, led down to the shore ; at the end of one of these, probably that called by Burckhardt the Wady Taybe, they halted on the beach. From thence they struck into the wilderness, but by this time their provisions totally failed, and the dreadful prospect of perishing by famine, in this barren and thirsty desert, arose before their eyes. Of all human miseries, both in apprehension and reality, to die slowly of hunger, and to see others, to whom we can afford no assistance, die around us, is undoubtedly the worst. The Israelites began to look back to Egypt, where, if they suffered toil and oppression, at least they never wanted food. All was forgotten—the miracles wrought in their favour, the promises of divine protection, the authority of their leader. Murmurs of discontent spread through the camp, till at length the whole body broke out into open remonstrances. But their Almighty Protector had not abandoned them ; and, in his name, without hesitation, Moses promised an immediate and plentiful supply. In the spring of the year quails, migratory birds, pass in large flocks over the Arabian peninsula ; they are very heavy on the wing, and their line of flight depends much on the direction of the wind. A cloud of these birds was suddenly wafted over the camp of the Israelites, and fell around them in immense numbers. Nor was this all ; in the morning, exactly

as Moses had foretold, the ground was covered with manna. This is now clearly ascertained, by Seetzen and Burckhardt, to be a natural production; it distils from the thorns of the tamarisk, in the month of June. It is still collected by the Arabs before sunrise, when it is coagulated, but it dissolves as soon as the sun shines upon it. "Its taste is agreeable, somewhat aromatic, and as sweet as honey. It may be kept for a year, and is only found after a wet season." It is still called by the Bedouins "mann."\* The quantity now collected, for it is only found in a few valleys, is very small; the preternatural part, therefore, of the Mosaic narrative consists in the immense and continual supply, and the circumstances under which it was gathered, particularly its being preserved firm and sweet only for the Sabbath-day. The regulation, that enough, and only enough, for the consumption of the day should be collected at a time, seems a prudent precaution, enforced by the remarkable provision, that no one found that he had collected more or less than an omer, lest the more covetous or active should attempt to secure an unfair proportion, and deprive the rest of their share.

After two other resting-places, at Dophkah and

\* The author, by the kindness of a traveller recently returned from Egypt, has received a small quantity of manna; it was, however, though still palatable, in a liquid state from the heat of the sun. He has obtained the additional curious fact, that manna, if not boiled or baked, will not keep more than a day, but becomes putrid, and breeds maggots. It is described as a small round substance, and is brought in by the Arabs in small quantities mixed with sand.



Alush, the Israelites arrived at the foot of that awful mountain already sanctified by the presence of their Almighty Creator. But a new calamity, not less insupportable than famine, the want of water, called forth new discontents and murmurs. So great was the excitement, that the life of Moses was endangered. He cried unto the Lord, saying, "What shall I do unto this people, they be almost ready to stone me." By the divine command, in the presence of the assembled elders, and with the rod with which he before struck the Nile, Moses smote the rock, and water flowed forth; the place was called Massah and Meribah, from the discontents of the people. Here likewise their fortitude, as well as their faith and patience, was put to the trial. The camp was suddenly surrounded by one of the wild marauding clans, the Amalekites; or, according to Josephus, by a confederacy of all the sheiks of the desert, determined to exterminate these invaders of their territory. Moses delegates the military command to Joshua, who afterwards conducted their armies to the conquest of Canaan. He himself, with his brother Aaron, and Hur, takes his station on an eminence; there, in the sight of the whole army, he raises his hands in earnest supplication to heaven. The Israelites, encouraged by their trust in Divine protection, fight manfully. Still the attack is fierce, long, and obstinate. The strength of Moses fails, and the Israelites behold with alarm and trepidation his arms hanging languidly down, and their courage, too, begins to give way. His companions observing this, place him on a stone, and support his hands on each side. The valour of the people

revives, and they gain a complete victory. This wanton and unprovoked aggression gave rise to a perpetual hereditary feud between the tribes; the Amalekites were devoted to eternal and implacable hostility.

The fame of these successes reached the pastoral chieftain, whose daughter Moses had married. Jethro joins the camp with Zipporah the wife, and Gershom, and Eliezer, the sons of Moses. He is received with great respect, and by his prudent advice the Jewish leader proceeds to organize the body of his people under more regular and effective discipline. Hitherto the whole burden of the religious and civil affairs had rested on himself: he had been the sole leader, sole judge, and sole interpreter of the Divine Will. He withdraws into the more remote and sacred character, leaving the common and daily affairs to be administered by officers, appointed in regular subordination over the subdivisions of the whole people, into tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands. These arrangements completed, the Israelites wind along the defiles of this elevated region, till at length they come to the foot of the loftiest peak in the whole ridge, that of Sinai. Here, after the most solemn preparations, and under the most terrific circumstances, the great lawgiver of the Jews delivered that singular constitution to his people which presupposed their possession of a rich and fertile territory in which as yet they had not occupied an acre, but had hitherto been wandering in an opposite direction, and not even approached its borders. The laws of a settled and civilized community were enacted among a wandering and

homeless horde, who were traversing the wilderness, and more likely, under their existing circumstances, to sink below the pastoral life of their forefathers, than advance to the rank of an industrious agricultural community. Yet, at this time, judging solely from its internal evidence, the law must have been enacted. Who but Moses ever possessed such authority as to enforce submission to statutes so severe and uncompromising? yet as Moses, incontestably, died before the conquest of Canaan, his legislature must have taken place in the desert. To what other period can the Hebrew constitution be assigned? To that of the judges? a time of anarchy, warfare, or servitude! To that of the kings? when the republic had undergone a total change! To any time after Jerusalem became the metropolis? when the holy city, the pride and glory of the nation, is not even alluded to in the whole law! After the building of the temple? when it is equally silent as to any settled or durable edifice! After the separation of the kingdoms? when the close bond of brotherhood had given place to implacable hostility! Under Hilkiah? under Ezra? when a great number of the statutes had become a dead letter! The law depended on a strict and equitable partition of the land. At a later period it could not have been put into practice without the forcible resumption of every individual property by the state; the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of such a measure, may be estimated by any reader who is not entirely unacquainted with the history of the ancient republics. In other respects, the law breathes the air of the desert. Enactments intended for a people with

settled habitations, and dwelling in walled cities, are mingled up with temporary regulations, only suited to the Bedouin encampment of a nomad tribe. There can be no doubt that the statute book of Moses, with all his particular enactments, still exists, and that it recites them in the same order, if it may be called order, in which they were promulgated.

First, however, must be related the circumstances under which the Hebrew constitution was enacted. The Israelites had been accustomed only to the level of the great Egyptian valley, or to the gentle slopes which skirted the pastures of Goshen; they had been travelling over the flat sands or moderate inequalities of the desert; the entrance into a wild and rugged mountainous region, the peaks of which were lost in the clouds, must in itself have excited awful and appalling emotions. How much more so, when these high and frowning precipices had been haunted by the presence of their God! Their leader departs alone to the unseen, and apparently inaccessible, summit of the mountain. He returns bearing a message from their God, which, while it asserts his universal dominion over the earth, proclaims his selection of the Israelites from all the nations, as his peculiar people; they were to be to the rest of mankind what the great caste of the Egyptian priesthood was to the other classes of that community. The most solemn purifications are enjoined; a line is drawn and fenced at the foot of the mountain, which, on pain of death, they are not to transgress. It is announced, that on the third day the presence of the Almighty will

display itself. On the third day the whole people assemble in trembling expectation ; the summit of the mountain appears clothed in the thickest darkness ; tremendous thunders and lightnings, phenomena new to the shepherds of Goshen, whose pastures had escaped the preternatural tempest in Egypt, burst forth, and the terrors are heightened by a wild sound, like that of a trumpet, mingling with, and prolonging, the terrific din of the tempest. The mountain seems to have shown every appearance of a volcanic eruption : blazing fires, huge columns of smoke, convulsions of the earth. Yet a most philosophical observer has decided, from the geological formation of the mountain, that it has never been subject to the agency of internal fire. The dauntless leader takes his stand in the midst of this confusion of the elements ; the trumpet peals still louder, and is answered by a voice distinct and audible, but from whence it proceeded no man knew. It summons Moses to the top of the mountain ; he returns, and still more earnestly enjoins the people not to break through the prescribed limits. Immediately on his descent, the mysterious voice utters those ten precepts usually called the Decalogue, a summary, or rather the first principles of the whole law. The precautions of Moses to restrain the curiosity or presumption of the people were scarcely necessary. Their fears are too highly excited ; instead of approaching the sacred summit of the mountain, they retire in terror from the place where they were assembled, and entreat that from henceforth they may receive the will of God, not directly, but through Moses, their acknowledged repre-



sentative. Moses again enters into the darkness, and returns with another portion of the law. The assent of the people to these leading principles of their constitution is then demanded; religious rites are performed; twelve altars raised; one for each tribe; sacrifice is offered, the law read, and the covenant between God, the law-giver, and the whole people, solemnly ratified by sprinkling them with the blood of the sacrifice. Moses again ascends the mountain, accompanied this time by Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, who were selected for the priestly office, and by seventy elders of Israel. All these remained at a respectful distance; yet, it is said, they saw the God of Israel; it should seem, the symbolic fire which indicated his presence, beneath which was what appeared like a pavement of lapis-lazuli, or sapphire, or the deep blue of the clearest and most cloudless heaven. Delegating the charge of the people to the elders, to Aaron, and to Hur, Moses once more ascended into the cloud, which was now at times illuminated with the glory of the Lord, *like a devouring fire*. For forty days he remained on the mountain, neither appearing nor holding any communication with the people. Day after day they expected his return: the gloom and silence of the mountain remained unbroken. Had he perished? Had he abandoned the people? Aaron himself is in the same total ignorance as to the designs and the fate of his brother. Whither shall they wander in the trackless desert? Who shall guide them? Their leader and their God seem equally to have deserted them. Still utterly at a loss to comprehend the sublime notions of the Deity, which their leader



would inculcate, they sink back to the superstitions of the country which they had left. They imperiously demand, and Aaron consents to cast, an image of gold, similar to the symbolic representation of the great god of the Egyptians, under the form of an ox or calf, and they begin to celebrate this new deity with all the noise, tumult, and merriment of an Egyptian festival. When their leader descends he sees the whole people dancing in their frantic adoration around the idol. In the first access of indignation, he casts down and breaks the stone tablets, on which the law was inscribed. He seizes the image, which was most likely of small dimensions, though raised on a lofty pole, commands it to be ground or dissolved to powder, throws it into the neighbouring fountain, and forces the people to drink the water impregnated with its dust. A more signal punishment awaits this heinous breach of the covenant. The tribe of Levi espouse the cause of God ; fall upon the people ; slay the offenders, without regard to kindred or relationship, till 3,000 men lie dead upon the field. The national crime thus dreadfully atoned, the intercourse between the law-giver and the Deity is renewed.\* Yet the offended God still threatens to withdraw his own visible presence during their approaching invasion of Canaan, that presence which he had before promised should attend on their armies, and discomfit their enemies ; he disclaims them as his people, and gives them over to the tutelar protection of *his angel*.

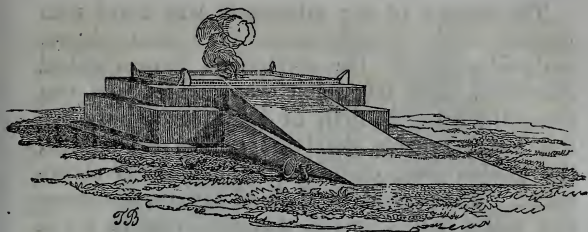
\* Josephus, jealous of the national character, omits this whole scene.

Already, before the construction of the great tabernacle, there had been a tent set apart for public purposes ; where the councils of the leaders had been held ; and, most probably, sacrifices performed. This tent Moses removed beyond the polluted precincts of the camp : no sooner had this been done, than the Deity appeared suddenly to return ; the people, standing before their tents, beheld the cloud of glory taking up its station at the door of the tabernacle into which Moses had entered. They bowed down at once in awe-struck adoration, while their God and their leader held their secret council within the tent. Within the tent a scene took place which it is best to relate in the language of the sacred writer. Moses having obtained the promise of divine protection for the people addressed the Almighty visitant—*I beseech thee show me thy glory*, that is, make me acquainted with the essence of the divine nature. And God said, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee. And he said, Thou canst not see my face : for there shall no man see me, and live.* Mortal man cannot comprehend the divine nature ; but afar off, and overshadowed by my protection, thou shalt be favoured with some farther revelation of the great Creator. On the re-ascent of Moses to the mountain, with two new tablets of stone, this promise is thus fulfilled,—*The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed,—the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear (the*

*guilty*), *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation.* Such were the notions of the Divinity, taught to a barbarous nation in that remote period of the world! Forty days longer the law-giver remained in secret conference with God upon the mountain. On his descent with the new tables of stone, the awe-struck people beheld his countenance so radiant and dazzling, that he was obliged to cover it with a veil; but it is not quite clear, whether or not, after that period, like several of the oriental conquerors, he was constantly shrouded with this veil, excepting only when he went into the tabernacle to communicate with God.

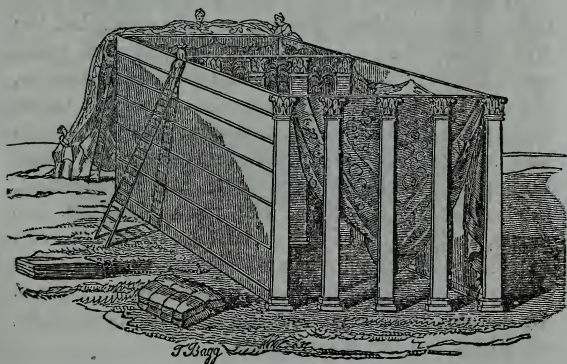
These pure and abstract notions of the Divinity were beyond the age and the people of Moses. No religious impressions would be lasting which were not addressed to the senses. With this view is commenced the sacred tabernacle or pavilion-temple, which hereafter is to occupy the central place of honour, that usually assigned to the king or chieftain of a nomadic horde. The whole nation is called upon to contribute to its construction and ornament. The riches which they brought from Egypt, and the arts which some of them had learnt, now come into request. From all quarters offerings pour in; brass, silver, gold, jewels, fine linen, embroidered stuffs of all colours, valuable skins, spices, oils, and incense, in such profusion that they cannot all be brought into use. The high district immediately around Sinai, extending about thirty miles in diameter, is by no means barren, the vegetation is richer than in other parts

of the desert, streams of water flow in the valleys, date and other trees abound, and groves, chiefly of the black acacia (the shittim). These latter were speedily felled, all the artificers set to work, the women were employed in weaving and spinning, and the whole camp assumed a busy appearance. The construction of the Tabernacle was entrusted to the superintendence of two skilful workmen, Bezaleel and Aholiab. The area, or open space in which the tabernacle stood, was an oblong square, 175 feet long by  $87\frac{1}{2}$  wide. The enclosure was made by twenty brazen pillars on the north and south sides, ten to the west, and six to the east, where the gate of entrance stood. The capitals of these pillars were of silver; the hooks and the rods, from which the curtains hung, of silver. The curtains were of fine linen or cotton, woven in a kind of net-work; the curtain before the entrance was of richer materials, and more brilliant colours—blue, purple, and scarlet, supported by four pillars, which do not seem to have been different from the other six that formed the eastern line of the court. Within the court before the tabernacle stood a great laver of brass, for the purpose of ablution, and the altar of burnt offerings, measuring eight feet and three quarters each way, five feet and a quarter high. The altar was overlaid with brass, and had a grate of brass in the centre. It stood immediately before the gate of the tabernacle.



ALTAR OF SACRIFICE.

The tabernacle itself was fifty-two feet and a half long, seventeen and a half wide, and the same high. It was made with planks of shittim wood, skilfully fitted and held together by poles, which ran the whole length through golden rings. The planks were overlaid with gold. To defend it from the weather it was hung without with curtains of a kind of canvass, made of goat's hair, and over the whole was thrown an awning of skins.



THE TABERNACLE.

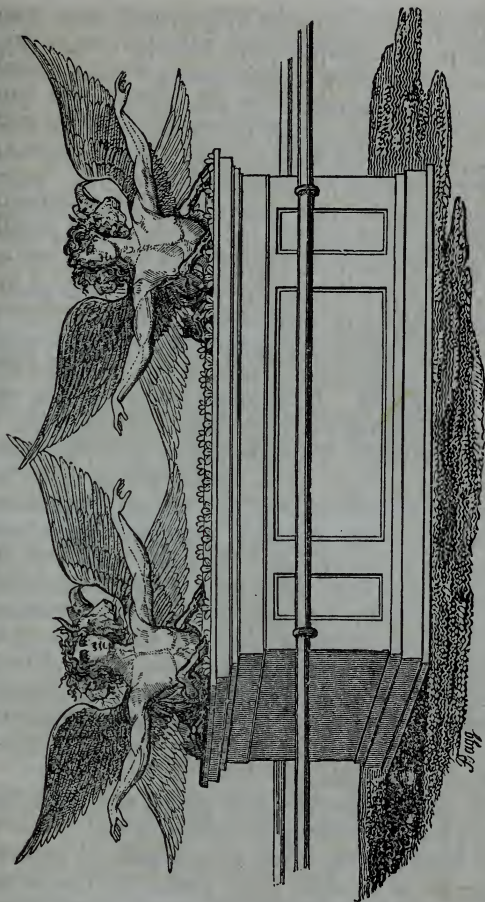


The interior of the tabernacle was hung with curtains of the finest linen and the richest colours, embroidered with the mysterious figures called cherubim. The tabernacle was divided into two unequal parts: the first, or holy place, thirty-five feet long; in this stood the golden candlestick, the golden altar of incense, the table of showbread. The second, or Holy of Holies, seventeen feet and a half in length, was parted off by a veil of the same costly materials, and splendid colours, with the rest of the hangings, and suspended by hooks of gold from four wooden pillars likewise overlaid with gold.

A solemn gloom, unless when the veil was partially lifted, prevailed in the Holy of Holies; in the holy place the altar was constantly fed with costly incense, and the splendid chandelier, with seven branches, wrought with knosps and flowers, illuminated the chamber, into which the day-light never entered.

Within the most sacred precinct, which was only entered by the High Priest, stood nothing but the Ark or coffer of wood, plated all over with gold, and surmounted by two of those emblematic figures, the cherubim, usually represented as angels under human forms, but more probably, like the Egyptian sphinx, animals purely imaginary and symbolic; combining different parts, and representing the noblest qualities of the man, the lion, the eagle, and the ox. They stood face to face at each extremity of the ark, and spread their golden wings so as to form a sort of canopy or throne. In the ark were deposited the two tablets of stone, on which the law was written.





THE ARK AND MERCY SEAT.

The priests, who were to minister in this sumptuous pavilion-temple, were likewise to have *holy garments for glory and for beauty*. Aaron and his sons were designated for this office. The high priest wore, first, a tunic of fine linen, which fitted close, and without a fold, to his person, with loose trowsers of linen ; over this a robe of blue, woven in one piece, without sleeves, with a hole through which the head passed, likewise fitted close round the neck with a rich border, and reached to the feet, where the lower rim was hung with pomegranates and little bells of gold, which sounded as he moved. Over this again was the ephod, made of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, twisted with threads of gold. It consisted of two pieces, one hanging behind, the other before, perhaps like a herald's tabard. From the hinder one, which hung much lower, came a rich girdle, passing under the arms, and fastened over the breast. It had two shoulder-pieces, in which were two large beryl stones, set in gold, on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved. From these shoulder-pieces came two gold chains, which fastened the pectoral, or breast-plate ; a piece of cloth of gold, a span square, in which twelve precious stones were set, in four rows, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes. Two other chains from the lower corners fastened the breast-plate to the lower part of the ephod.

In the breast-plate was placed the mysterious Urim and Thummim, the nature of which was so well known to the Jews, as to require no explanation—to us remains mere matter of conjecture. The most probable opinion seems, that the two

words mean Light and Perfection, and were nothing more than the twelve bright and perfect stones set in the breast-plate, emblematic of the union and consent of the whole nation, without which the high priest might not presume to interrogate the oracle of God. If the oracle was given by the Urim and Thummim itself, it seems not improbable, that the stones appearing bright or clouded might signify the favour or disfavour of the Almighty ; but it is more likely that the oracle was delivered by a voice from the sanctuary. It is a remarkable coincidence, that the Egyptian high priest, according to Diodorus and Ælian, wore round his neck, by a golden chain, a sapphire gem, with an image representing Truth. The head-dress of the priest was a rich turban of fine linen, on the front of which appeared a golden plate, inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

Such were the first preparations for the religious ceremonial of the Jews. As this tall and sumptuous pavilion rose in the midst of the coarse and lowly tents of the people, their God seemed immediately to take possession of the structure raised to his honour. All the day the cloud, all the night the pillar of fire rested on the tabernacle. When the camp broke up, it rose and led the way, when the people came to their resting-place, it remained unmoved.

Thus the great Jehovah was formally and deliberately recognized by the people of Israel as their God—the sole object of their adoration. By the law, to which they gave their free and unconditional assent, he became their king, the head of their civil constitution, and the feudal lord of all their terri-



HIGH PRIEST.



COMMON PRIEST.



tory, of whom they were to hold their lands on certain strict, but equitable terms of vassalage. Hence the Mosaic constitution, of which we proceed to give a brief outline, was in its origin and principles entirely different from every human polity. It was a federal compact, not between the people at large and certain members or classes of the community designated as the rulers, but between the Founder of the state, the proprietor of the land which they were to inhabit, and the Hebrew nation, selected from all the rest of the world for some great ulterior purpose. The Hebrews were not a free and independent people entering into a primary contract in what manner their country was to be governed; they had neither independence nor country, but as the free gift of their sovereign. The tenure by which they held all their present and future blessings, freedom from bondage, the inheritance of the land flowing with milk and honey, the promise of unexampled fertility, was their faithful discharge of their trust, the preservation of the great religious doctrine—the worship of the one great Creator. *Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land flowing with milk and honey.* *Hear, O Israel, THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.* Thus the rights of the sovereign, not merely as God, but as the head of the state, or theocracy, were anterior to the rights of the people—the well-being of the community, the ultimate end of human legislation, was subordinate and secondary to the great purpose for which the Jews existed as a separate nation. Hence any advantage to be derived



from foreign commerce, or from a larger intercourse with the neighbouring tribes, wealth, or the acquisition of useful arts, could not for an instant come into competition with the danger of relapsing into polytheism. This was the great national peril, as well as the great national crime. By this they annulled their compact with their sovereign, and forfeited their title to the promised land. Yet by what legal provisions was the happiness of any people, *sua si bona nôrint*, so bountifully secured as by the Jewish constitution? A country under a delicious climate, where the corn-fields, the pastures, the vineyards, and olive-grounds, vied with each other in fertility; perfect freedom and equality; a mild and parental government, the administration of justice by local authorities according to a written law; national festivals tending to promote national union;—had the people duly appreciated the blessings attached to the strict and permanent observance of their constitution, poets might have found their golden age in the plains of Galilee and the valleys of Judæa.

The fundamental principle of the Jewish constitution, the purity of worship, was guarded by penal statutes; and by a religious ceremonial, admirably adapted to the age and to the genius of the people, and even accommodated, as far as possible, to their previous nomadic and Egyptian habits and feelings. The penal laws were stern and severe, for idolatry was two-fold treason—against the majesty of the sovereign, and the well-being of the state. The permanence of the national blessings depended on the integrity of the national faith. Apostasy in the single city, or the individual, brought, as far

as was in their power, the curse of barrenness, defeat, famine, or pestilence, on the whole land. It was repressed with the most unrelenting severity. If any city was accused of this anti-national crime, and after strict and diligent investigation was found guilty of setting up false gods for public worship, the inhabitants were to be put to the sword, no living thing, not even the cattle spared; the whole spoil was to be collected in a heap and burned, (a wise regulation, lest an opulent community should be unjustly accused and laid waste for the purpose of plunder,) the whole city to be set on fire, razed to the ground, and the strongest anathema pronounced against any one who should attempt to rebuild it.—Deut. xiii. 13—18. To convict an individual of idolatry, the testimony of two witnesses was required; if condemned, he was publicly stoned to death—the two witnesses were to cast the first stone. Idolatry was of two kinds: 1st, image worship, or the representation of the one great Creator under the similitude or symbolic likeness of any created being. The history of all religion shows the danger of this practice. The representative symbol remains after its meaning is forgotten; and thus the most uncouth and monstrous forms, originally harmless emblems of some attribute belonging to the divinity, become the actual deities of the vulgar worship. 2d. The substitution, or what was more usual, the association of other gods with the one great God of their fathers. The religion of the natives, in whose territory the Israelites were about to settle, appears to have been a depravation of the purer Tsabaism, or worship of the host of heaven. On

this primitive form of idolatry had gradually been engrafted a system of rites, absurd, bloody, or licentious. Among the Canaanites human sacrifices were common—babes were burnt alive to Moloch. The inland tribes, the Moabites and Midianites, worshipped that obscene symbol, which originally represented the generative influence of the sun, but had now become a distinct divinity. The chastity of their women was the offering most acceptable to Baal Peor, or the Lord Peor. It was this inhuman and loathsome religion which was to be swept away from the polluted territory of Palestine by the exterminating conquest of the Jews; against the contagion of these abominations they were to be secured by the most rigid penal statutes, and by capital punishments summary and without appeal. All approximation to these horrible usages was interdicted with equal severity. The Canaanites had no enclosed temples, their rites were performed in consecrated or open spaces on the summits of their hills, or under the shade of groves devoted to their deities. The worship of God on mountain-tops, otherwise a sublime and innocent practice, was proscribed. No grove might be planted near the altar of the Holy One of Israel, the strictest personal purity was enjoined upon the priests; the prohibition against prostituting their daughters, as well as that which forbids the woman to appear in the dress of the man, the man in that of the woman, are no doubt pointed against the same impure ceremonies. Not merely were human sacrifices expressly forbidden, but the animals which were to be sacrificed, with every particular to be observed, were strictly laid down. All

the vulgar arts of priestcraft, divination, witchcraft, necromancy, were proscribed. Even a certain form of tonsure, certain particoloured dresses, and other peculiar customs of the heathen priesthoods, were specifically forbidden.

But while this line of demarcation between the worshippers of one God and the worshippers of idols was so strongly and precisely drawn, a rude and uncivilized horde were not expected to attain that pure and exalted spirituality of religion, which has never been known except among a reasoning and enlightened people. Their new religion ministered continual excitement. A splendid ceremonial dazzled their senses, perpetual sacrifices enlivened their faith, frequent commemorative festivals not merely let loose their gay and joyous spirits, but reminded them of all the surprising and marvellous events of their national history. From some of their prepossessions and habits they were estranged by degrees, not rent with unnecessary violence. The tabernacle preserved the form of the more solid and gigantic structures of Egypt; their priesthood were attired in dresses as costly, in many respects similar; their ablutions were as frequent; the exclusion of the daylight probably originated in subterranean temples hewn out of the solid rock, like those of Ipsambul and the cave temples of India; the use of incense seems to have been common in every kind of religious worship. Above all, the great universal rite of sacrifice was regulated with the utmost precision. It is unnecessary to enter into all these minute particulars, still less into the remote and typical meaning of the Jewish sacrificial law. Suffice it to say, that sacrifices were either

national or individual. Every morning and every evening the smoke from the great brazen altar of burnt offerings ascended in the name of the whole people—on the Sabbath two animals instead of one were slain. From particular sacrifices or offerings no one, not even the poorest, was excluded. A regular scale of oblations was made, and the altar of the common God of Israel rejected not the small measure of flour which the meanest might offer. The sacrifices were partly propitiatory, that is, voluntary acts of reverence, in order to secure the favour of God to the devout worshipper: partly eucharistic, or expressive of gratitude for the divine blessings. Of this nature were the first fruits. The Israelite might not reap the abundant harvest, with which God blessed his fertile fields, or gather in the vintage, which empurpled the rocky hill-side, without first making an oblation of thanksgiving to the gracious Being, who had placed him in the land flowing with milk and honey. Lastly, they were piacular or expiatory; every sin either of the nation or the individual, whether a sin committed in ignorance, or from wilful guilt, had its appointed atonement; and on the performance of this condition the priest had the power of declaring the offender free from the punishment due to his crime. One day in the year, the tenth day of the seventh month, was set apart for the solemn rite of national expiation. First a bullock was to be slain, and the blood sprinkled, not only in the customary places, but within the Holy of Holies itself. Then two goats were to be chosen, lots cast upon them, the one that was assigned to the Lord was to be sacrificed, the other, on whose head the sins of the whole



people were heaped by the imprecation of the high priest, was taken beyond the camp and sent into the desert to Azazel, the spirit of evil, to whom Hebrew belief assigned the waste and howling wilderness as his earthly dwelling. An awful example confirmed the unalterable authority of the sacrificial ritual. At the first great sacrifice, after the consecration of the priesthood, on the renewal of the national covenant with the Deity, fire flashed down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offerings. But Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, kindled their censers with fire, obtained from some less pure and hallowed source; and, having thus acted without command, were struck dead for the offence.

The ordinary festivals of the Jewish nation were of a gayer and more cheerful character. Every seventh day was the Sabbath: labour ceased throughout the whole land, the slave and the stranger, even the beast of labour or burden, were permitted to enjoy the period of ease and recreation: while the double sanction, on which the observance of the day rested, reminded every faithful Israelite of his God, under his twofold character of Creator and Deliverer. All creation should rest, because on that day the Creator rested; Israel more particularly, because on that day they rested from their bondage in Egypt. In later times, as well as a day of grateful recollection, it became one of public instruction in the principles of the law, and of social equality among all classes. Rich and poor, young and old, master and slave, met before the gate of the city, and indulged in innocent mirth, or in the pleasures of friendly intercourse.



The new moon of the seventh month was appointed as the Feast of Trumpets ; it was in fact the beginning of the old Hebrew, and remained that of the civil, year. The new moon, or the first day of the lunar month, was not commanded by positive precept, but recognized as a festival of established usage. But if those weekly or monthly meetings contributed to the maintenance of the religion, and to the cheerfulness and kindly brotherhood among the separate communities, the three great national festivals advanced those important ends in a far higher degree. Three times a year all the tribes assembled wherever the tabernacle of God was fixed ; all the males, for the legislator carefully guarded against any dangers which might arise from a promiscuous assemblage of both sexes ; besides that the women were ill qualified to bear the fatigue of journeys from the remote parts of the land, and the household offices were not to be neglected. This regulation was a master-stroke of policy, to preserve the bond of union indissoluble among the twelve federal republics, which formed the early state. Its importance may be estimated from the single fact, that, on the revolt of the ten tribes, Jeroboam did not consider his throne secure so long as the whole people assembled at the capital ; and appointed Dan and Bethel, where he set up his emblematic calves, as the places of religious union for his own subjects. The first and greatest of these festivals, the Passover, or rather the first full moon, the commencement of the religious year, was as it were the birthday of the nation, the day of their deliverance from Egypt, when the angel of death passed over their dwellings. The festival

lasted seven days, and every ceremony recalled the awful scene of their deliverance. On the first evening they tasted the bitter herb, emblematic of the bitterness of slavery ; they partook of the sacrifice, with their loins girded as ready for their flight ; they eat only unleavened bread, the bread of slavery, prepared in the hurry and confusion of their departure. During the fifty days, which elapsed after the Passover, the harvest was gathered in, and the Pentecost, the national harvest home, summoned the people to commemorate the delivery of the law and the formation of the covenant, by which they became the tenants of the luxuriant soil, the abundance of which they had been storing up. The gladness was to be as general as the blessing. *Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man servant and thy maid servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow.* The third of these feasts, that of tabernacles, took place in autumn, at the end of the vintage, in all southern climates the great time of rejoicing and merriment. If more exquisite music and more graceful dances accompanied the gathering in of the grapes on the banks of the Cephisus,—the tabret, the viol, and the harp, which sounded among the vineyards of Heshbon and Eleale, were not wanting in sweetness and gaiety ; and instead of the frantic riot of satyrs and bacchanals, the rejoicing was chastened by the solemn religious recollections with which it was associated, in a manner remarkably pleasing and picturesque. The branches of trees were woven together in rude imitation of the tents in which

the Israelites dwelt in the desert, and within these green bowers the whole people passed the week of festivity. Yet however admirably calculated these periodical solemnities for the maintenance of religion and national unity, they were better adapted for the inhabitants of one of the oases in the desert, or a lonely island in the midst of the ocean, than a nation environed on all sides by warlike, enterprising, and inveterate enemies. At each of these festivals, the frontiers were unguarded, the garrisons deserted, the country left entirely open to the sudden inroad of the neighbouring tribes. This was not unforeseen by the lawgiver, but how was it provided against? by an assurance of divine protection, which was to repress all the hostility and ambition of their adversaries. *I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thrice in every year.\** The sabbatic year was another remarkable instance of departure from every rule of political wisdom, in reliance on divine Providence. The whole land was to lie fallow, the whole people was given up to legalized idleness. All danger of famine was to be prevented by the supernaturally abundant harvest of the sixth year; but it is even more remarkable, that serious evils did not ensue from this check on the national industry. At the end of seven periods of seven years, for that number ran through the whole of the Hebrew institutions, the

\* Exod. xxxiv. 24.

jubilee was appointed.\* All the estates were to revert to their original owners, all burthens and alienations ceased, and the whole land returned to the same state in which it stood at the first partition. A singular Agrarian law, which maintained the general equality, and effectually prevented the accumulation of large masses of property in one family to the danger of the national independence, and the establishment of a great landed oligarchy.

Such was the religious constitution of the Hebrew nation. But if the lawgiver, educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, departed most widely from the spirit of Egyptian polytheism in the fundamental principle of his religious institutes, the political basis of his state was not less opposite to that established in the kingdom of the Pharaohs. The first, and certainly the most successful legislator of antiquity who assumed the welfare of the whole community as the end of his constitution, Moses annihilated, at once, the artificial and tyrannical distinction of castes, and established political equality as the fundamental principle of the state. The whole nation was one great caste, that of husbandmen, cultivating their own property. Even the single privileged class, that of Levi, stood on a totally different footing from the sacerdotal aristocracy of Egypt. With a wise originality, the Hebrew polity retained all that was really useful, and indeed, under the circumstances of the age and people, absolutely necessary, in a priestly order, and rejected all that might endanger

\* This institution, as well as the last was, perhaps, rather of a civil than religious character.

the liberties of the people, through their exorbitant wealth or power. In a constitution founded on a religious basis, sacred functionaries set apart from the mass of the people were indispensable ; where the state was governed by a written law, minute and multifarious in its provisions, conservators, and occasional expositors of the law were equally requisite ; a people at first engaged in ferocious warfare, afterwards engrossed by agricultural labours, without an exempt order which should devote itself to higher and more intellectual studies, would soon have degenerated into ignorance and barbarism. Besides the officiating priesthood, the Levitical class furnished the greater number of the judges, the scribes, the genealogists and registers of the tribes, the keepers of the records, the geometricians, the superintendants of weights and measures ; and Michaelis thinks, from the judgment in cases of leprosy being assigned to them, the physicians. Their influence depended rather on their civil than their ecclesiastical functions. They were not, strictly speaking, religious teachers ; they were bound to read the whole law, once in seven years, before the people ; but, in other respects, their priestly duties consisted only in attendance in the tabernacle or the temple, in their appointed courses. There were no private religious rites in which they were called on to officiate. Circumcision was performed without their presence, marriage was a civil contract, from funerals they were interdicted. They were not mingled up with the body of the people, they dwelt in their own separate cities. Their wealth was ample, but not enormous. Instead of the portion



in the conquered land, to which they had a claim, as one of the twelve tribes, a tenth of the whole produce was assigned for their maintenance, with forty-eight cities, situated in different parts of the territory, and a small domain surrounding each. These were the possessions of the whole tribe of Levi. The officiating priesthood received other contributions, portions of the sacrifices, the redemption of the first born, the first fruits, and every thing devoted by vow : yet most of these last were probably laid up in the public religious treasury, and defrayed the expenses of the rich and costly worship, the repair and ornament of the tabernacle, the vestments of the priests, the public sacrifices, the perpetual oil, and incense. The half-shekel poll-tax was, we conceive, only once levied by Moses, and not established as a permanent tax till after the captivity. Such were the station, the revenue, and the important duties assigned to his own tribe by the Hebrew legislator, a tribe, as one of the least numerous, most fitly chosen for these purposes. On the departure from Egypt, the first-born of each family were designated for these sacred duties ; but the difficulties and inconveniences which would have attended the collecting together the representatives of every family into one class, the jealousies which might have arisen from assigning so great a distinction to primogeniture, and many other obvious objections, show that the substitution of a single tribe was, at once, a more simple and a more effective measure. The superiority of Moses, in all other respects, to the pride of family, particularly where hereditary honours were so highly



appreciated, is among the most remarkable features in his character. The example of Egypt and of all the neighbouring nations would have led him to establish an hereditary monarchy in his own line, connected and supported, as it might have been, by the sacerdotal order; but though he made over the high-priesthood to the descendants of his brother Aaron, his own sons remained without distinction, and his descendants sank into insignificance. While he anticipated the probability that his republic would assume, hereafter, a monarchical form, he designated no permanent head of the state, either hereditary or elective. Joshua was appointed as military leader to achieve the conquest, and for this purpose succeeded to the supreme authority. But God was the only king, the law his only vicegerent.

Did Moses appoint a national senate? if so, what was its duration, its constitution, and its powers? No question in Jewish history is more obscure. At the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai, Moses was attended by seventy elders; during a rebellion in the wilderness (Numb. xi.) he established a great council of the same number. This latter, the Jewish writers suppose to have been a permanent body, and from thence derive their great Sanhedrin, which took so important a part in public affairs after the captivity. But this senate of seventy, is not once distinctly named in the whole intervening course of Hebrew history. Joshua twice assembled a sort of diet or parliament, consisting of elders, heads of families, judges, and officers, who seem to have represented all Israel. At other times the same sort of national council seems

to have met on great emergencies. But most probably neither the constitution, nor the powers, nor the members of this assembly were strictly limited. Moses left the internal government of the tribes as he found it. Each tribe had its acknowledged aristocracy and acknowledged chieftain, and governed its own affairs as a separate republic. The chieftain was the hereditary head of the whole tribe; the aristocracy, the heads of the different families: these, with the judges, and perhaps the shoterim, the scribes or genealogists, officers of great importance in each tribe, constituted the provincial assembly. No doubt the national assembly consisted of delegates from the provincial ones; but how they were appointed, and by whom, does not appear. In short, in the early ages of the Hebrew nation, the public assemblies were more like those of our German ancestors, or a meeting of independent septs or clans, where general respect for birth, age, or wisdom, designated those who should appear, and those who should take a lead, than the senate of a regular government, in which the right to a seat and to suffrage is defined by positive law. The ratification of all great public decrees by the general voice of the people (the congregation) seems invariably to have been demanded, particularly during their encampment in the desert. This was given, as indeed it could not well be otherwise, by acclamation. Thus in the ancient Hebrew constitution we find a rude convention of estates, provincial parliaments, and popular assemblies; but that their meetings should be of rare occurrence, followed from the nature of the constitution. The state possessed no legisla-

tive power ; in peace, unless on very extraordinary occasions, they had no business to transact ; there was no public revenue, except that of the religious treasury ; their wars, till the time of the kings, were mostly defensive. The invaded tribe summoned the nation to its assistance ; no deliberation was necessary ; the militia, that is, all who could bear arms, were bound to march to the defence of their brethren. Such was the law : we shall see, hereafter, that the separate tribes did not always preserve this close union in their wars ; and, but for the indissoluble bond of their religion, the confederacy was in perpetual danger of falling to pieces.

The judges or prefects, appointed according to the advice of Jethro, seem to have given place to municipal administrators of the law in each of the cities. The superior education and intelligence of the Levitical order, pointed them out as best fitted for these offices, which were usually entrusted, by general consent, to their charge. Of their numbers, or mode of nomination, we know nothing certain. They held their sittings, after the usual Oriental custom, in the gates of the cities.

The people were all free ; and, excepting this acknowledged subordination to the heads of their families and of their tribes, entirely equal. Slavery, universal in the ancient world, was recognized by the Mosaic institutions ; but of all the ancient lawgivers, Moses alone endeavoured to mitigate its evils. His regulations always remind the Israelites, that they themselves were formerly bond-slaves in Egypt. The free-born Hebrew might be reduced to slavery, either by his own consent, or in condemnation as an insolvent debtor,

or as a thief unable to make restitution. In either case he became free at the end of seven years' service. If he refused to accept his manumission, he might remain in servitude. But to prevent any fraudulent or compulsory renunciation of this right, the ceremony of reconsigning himself to bondage was public; he appeared before the magistrate, his ear was bored, and he was thus judicially delivered back to his master; but even this servitude expired at the Jubilee, when the free-born Hebrew returned into the possession of his patrimonial estate. The law expressly abhorred the condemnation of an Israelite to perpetual servitude. As a punishment for debt, slavery, at least under its mitigated form, may be considered as merciful to the sufferer, and certainly more advantageous to the creditor and to the public, than imprisonment. The Israelite sold to a stranger might at any time be redeemed by his kindred on payment of the value of the service that remained due. He who became a slave, being already married, recovered the freedom of his wife and family as well as his own; he who married a fellow slave, left her and her children as the property of his master. The discharged slave was not to be cast forth upon society naked and destitute; he was to be decently clothed, and liberally furnished *out of the flock, and out of the floor, and out of the wine-press.*

A parent in extreme distress might sell his children; if male, of course the slave recovered his freedom at the usual time—if female, the law took her under its especial protection. By a mitigation of the original statute, in ordinary cases, she regained her freedom at the end of the seven years. But if

the master took her himself, or gave her to his son, as an inferior wife, she was to receive the full conjugal rights of her station ; if denied them, she recovered her freedom. If he did not marry her, she might be redeemed ; but on no account was to be trafficked away into a foreign land.

After all, slavery is too harsh a term to apply to this temporary hiring, in which, though the master might inflict blows, he was amenable to justice if the slave died under his hands, or within two days, from the consequence of the beating : if maimed or mutilated, the slave recovered his freedom. The law went further, and positively enjoined kindness and lenity : *Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but thou shalt fear the Lord.*

The condition of foreign slaves was less favourable ; whether captives taken in war, purchased, or born in the family, their servitude was perpetual. Yet they too partook of those indulgencies which, in a spirit very different from that which bestowed on the wretched slaves in Rome the mock honours of their disorderly Saturnalia, the Jewish law secured for the slave, as well as for the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. The Sabbath was to them a day of rest ; on the three great festivals they partook of the banquets which were made on those occasions. All that grew spontaneously during the sabbatical year, belonged to them, in common with the poor. Besides these special provisions, injunctions perpetually occur in the Mosaic code, which enforce kindness, compassion, and charity, not merely towards the native poor, but to the stranger. Far from that jealous inhospitality and hatred of mankind, of which the later Jews were



not altogether unjustly accused, the stranger, unless a Canaanite, might become naturalized, or if he resided in the land, without being incorporated with the people, he was not excluded from the protection of the law. He was invited to the public rejoicings; he was to be a witness and partaker in the bounties of the God who blessed the land.

Such were the political divisions among the Hebrew people; but over all classes alike, the supreme and impartial law exercised its vigilant superintendence. It took under its charge the morals, the health, as well as the persons and the property, of the whole people. It entered into the domestic circle, and regulated all the reciprocal duties of parent and child, husband and wife, as well as of master and servant. Among the nomad tribes, from which the Hebrews descended, the father was an arbitrary sovereign in his family, as under the Roman law, with the power of life and death. Moses, while he maintained the dignity and salutary controul, limited the abuse of the parental authority. From the earliest period, the child was under the protection of the law. Abortion and infanticide were not specifically forbidden, but unknown, among the Jews. Josephus, appealing in honest pride to the practice of his countrymen, reproaches other nations with these cruelties. The father was enjoined to instruct his children in all the memorable events and sacred usages of the land. In extreme indigence, we have seen, the sale of children, as slaves, was permitted, but only in the same cases, and under the same conditions, that the parent might sell himself, to escape starvation, and for a limited



period. The father had no power of disinheriting his sons ; the first-born received by law two portions, the rest shared equally. On the other hand, the Decalogue enforced obedience and respect to parents, under the strongest sanctions. To strike, or to curse a parent was a capital offence. On parricide, the law, as if, like that of the Romans, it refused to contemplate its possibility, preserved a sacred silence. Though the power of life and death was not left to the caprice or passion of the parent, the incorrigible son might be denounced before the elders of the city, and, if convicted, suffered death. It is remarkable that the father and mother were to concur in the accusation, a most wise precaution, where polygamy, the fruitful source of domestic dissension and jealousy, prevailed.

The chastity of females was guarded by statutes, which, however severe and cruel according to modern notions, were wise and merciful in that state of society. Poems and Travels have familiarized us with the horrible atrocities committed by the blind jealousy of eastern husbands. By substituting a judicial process for the wild and hurried justice of the offended party, the guilty suffered a death, probably, less inhuman ; the innocent might escape. The convicted adulterer and adulteress were stoned to death. Even the incontinence of a female before marriage, if detected at the time of her nuptials, which was almost inevitable, underwent the same penalty with that of the adulteress. Where the case was not clear, the female suspected of infidelity might be summoned to a most awful ordeal. She was to be acquitted

or condemned by God himself, whose actual interposition was promised by his daring lawgiver. The woman was led forth from her own dwelling into the court of the Lord's house. In that solemn place she first made an offering of execration ; not entreating mercy, but imprecating the divine vengeance if she should be guilty. The priest then took some of the holy water, and mingled it with some of the holy earth : as he placed the bowl of bitter ingredients in her hand, he took off the veil in which she was accustomed to conceal herself from the eyes of man, and left her exposed to the public gaze : her hair was loosened, and the dreadful form of imprecation recited. If innocent, the water was harmless ; if guilty, the Lord would make her a curse and an oath, among the people : she was to be smitten at once with a horrid disease ; *her thigh was to rot, her belly to swell*. To this adjuration of the great all-seeing God, the woman was to reply, *Amen, Amen*. A solemn pause ensued, during which, the priest wrote down all the curses, and washed them out again with the water. She was then to drink the water, if she dared ; but what guilty woman, if she had courage to confront, would have the command of countenance, the firmness and resolution to go through all this slow, searching, and terrific process, and finally, expose herself to shame and agony, far worse than death ? No doubt, cases where this trial was undergone were rare ; yet, the confidence of the legislator in the divine interference can hardly be questioned ; for, had such an institution fallen into contempt by its failure in any one instance, his whole law and

religion would have been shaken to its foundation.

Marriages were contracted by parents, in behalf of their children. A dowry, or purchase-money, was usually given by the bridegroom. Polygamy was permitted, rather than encouraged: the law did not directly interfere with the immemorial usage, but, by insisting on each wife or concubine receiving her full conjugal rights, prevented even the most wealthy from establishing those vast harems which are fatal to the happiness, and eventually to the population, of a country. The degrees of relationship, between which marriage was forbidden, were defined with singular minuteness. The leading principle of these enactments was to prohibit marriage between those parties among whom, by the usage of their society, early and frequent intimacy was unavoidable, and might lead to abuse.

Having thus secured the domestic happiness of his people, or, at least, moderated, as far as the times would allow, those lawless and inordinate passions which overbear the natural tenderness of domestic instinct and the attachment between the sexes—guarded the father from the disobedience of the son, the son from the capricious tyranny of the father—secured the wife from being the victim of every savage fit of jealousy, while he sternly repressed the crime of conjugal infidelity, the law-giver proceeded, with the same care and discretion, to provide for the general health of the people. With this view he regulated their diet, enforced cleanliness, took precautions against the most prevalent diseases, and left the rest, as he safely

might, to the genial climate of the country, the wholesome exercise of husbandry, and the cheerful relaxations afforded by the religion. The health of the people was a chief, if not the only object of the distinction between clean and unclean beasts, and the prohibition against eating the blood of any animal. All coarse, hard, and indigestible food is doubly dangerous in warm climates. The general feeling of mankind has ordinarily abstained from most of the animals proscribed by the Mosaic law, excepting sometimes the camel, the hare, and the swine. The flesh of the camel is vapid and heavy; the wholesomeness of the hare is questioned by Hippocrates; that of the swine in southern countries tends to produce cutaneous maladies, the diseases to which the Jews were peculiarly liable; besides that the animal being usually left in the east to its own filthy habits, is not merely unwholesome, but disgusting; it is the scavenger of the towns. Of the birds, those of prey were forbidden; of fish, those without fins or scales. The prohibition of blood (besides its acknowledged unwholesomeness, and in some instances fatal effects) perhaps pointed at the custom of some savage tribes, which, like the Abyssinians, fed upon flesh torn warm from the animal, and almost quivering with life. This disgusting practice may have been interdicted not merely as unwholesome, but as promoting that ferocity of manners which it was the first object of the lawgiver to discourage.\*

Cleanliness, equally important to health with

\* The blood of the sacrifices was especially forbidden, being sanctified as the means of atonement.

wholesome diet, was maintained by the injunction of frequent ablutions, particularly after touching a dead body, or anything which might possibly be putrid ; by regulations concerning female disorders, and the intercourse between the sexes ; provisions which seem minute and indelicate to modern ideas, but were doubtless intended to correct unseemly or unhealthful practices, either of the Hebrew people or of neighbouring tribes. The leprosy was the dreadful scourge which excited the greatest apprehension. The nature of this loathsome disease is sufficiently indicated by the expressive description—*a leper as white as snow*. In its worst stage the whole flesh rotted, the extremities dropt off, till at last mortification ensued, and put an end to the sufferings of the miserable outcast ; for as the disease was highly infectious the unhappy victim was immediately shunned, and looked on with universal abhorrence. The strict quarantine established by Moses provided for the security of the community, not without merciful regard to the sufferer. The inspection of the infected was committed to the Levites ; the symptoms of the two kinds of disorder accurately pointed out ; the period of seclusion defined ; while all, if really cured, were certain of re-admission into the community, none were re-admitted until perfectly cured. Clothes, and even houses which might retain the infection, were to be destroyed without scruple ; though it does not seem quite clear whether the plague, which lurked in the plaster of houses, was the same leprosy which might become contagious, or a kind of mildew or worm, which might breed some other destructive malady.



Human life, in all rude and barbarous tribes, is of cheap account ; blood is shed on the least provocation ; open or secret assassination is a common occurrence. The Hebrew penal law enforced the highest respect for the life of man. Murder ranked with high treason, (i.e., idolatry, blasphemy,) striking a father, adultery, and unnatural lust, as a capital crime : the law demanded blood for blood. But it transferred the exaction of the penalty from private revenge, and committed it to the judicial authority. To effect this, it had to struggle with an inveterate though barbarous usage, which still prevails among the Arabian tribes. By a point of honour, as rigorous as that of modern duelling, the nearest of kin is bound to revenge the death of his relation : he is his Goel or blood-avenger. He makes no inquiry : he allows no pause : whether the deceased has been slain on provocation, by accident, or of deliberate malice, death can only be atoned by the blood of the homicide. To mitigate the evils of an usage too firmly established to be rooted out, Moses appointed certain cities of refuge, conveniently situated. If the homicide could escape to one of these, he was safe till a judicial investigation took place. If the crime was deliberate murder, he was surrendered to the Goel ; if justifiable or accidental homicide, he was bound to reside within the sanctuary for a certain period : should he leave it, and expose himself to the revenge of his pursuers, he did so at his own peril, and might be put to death. Where a murder was committed, of which the perpetrator was undetected, the nearest city was commanded to make an offering of atonement. With the same jealous



regard for human life, a strict police regulation enacted that the terrace on the top of every house should have a parapet. In one case inexcusable carelessness, which caused death, was capitally punished. If an ox gored a man so that he died, the beast was put to death: if the owner had been warned, he also suffered the same penalty; but in this case his life might be redeemed at a certain price. In other respects personal injury was punished by strict retaliation, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The Jews however assert that, from the earliest period, these penalties were commuted for a pecuniary mulct, according to a regular scale.

While the law was thus rigorous with regard to human life, against the crime of theft it was remarkably lenient. Man-stealing, as the kidnapped person could only be sold to foreigners, inflicted political death, and was therefore a capital offence; but the ordinary punishment of theft was restitution. Here personal slavery was a direct advantage, as it empowered the law to exact the proper punishment without touching the life. No man was so poor that he could not make restitution; because the labour of a slave being of higher value than his maintenance, his person could be sold either to satisfy a creditor, or to make compensation for a theft.

The law of property may be most conveniently stated after the final settlement of the country.

In all the foregoing statutes we see the legislator constantly, yet discreetly, mitigating the savage usages of a barbarous people. There are some minor provisions to which it is difficult to assign

any object, except that of softening the ferocity of manners, and promoting gentleness and humanity; kindness to domestic animals—the prohibition to employ beasts of unequal strength, the ox and the ass, on the same labour (unless this is to be classed with those singular statutes of which we have no very satisfactory explanation, which forbade wearing garments of mixed materials, or sowing mixed seeds)—the prohibition to seethe a kid in its mother's milk (though this likewise is supposed by Spencer to be aimed at a religious usage)—or to take the young of birds and the dam together. Towards all their fellow-creatures the same kindly conduct was enjoined on the Hebrew people, both by general precept and by particular statute. The mildness of their slave-law has been often contrasted, to their advantage, with that of those ancient nations which made the loudest boast of their freedom and civilization. The provisions for the poor were equally gentle and considerate; the gleanings of every harvest field were left to the fatherless and widow; the owner might not go over it a second time; the home of the poor man was sacred; his garment, if pledged, was to be restored at nightfall. Even towards the stranger oppression was forbidden; if indigent, he shared in all the privileges reserved for the native poor.

The general war-law, considering the age, was not deficient in lenity. War was to be declared in form. The inhabitants of a city, which made resistance, might be put to the sword, that is, the males; but only after it had been summoned to surrender. Fruit-trees were not to be destroyed during a siege. The conduct towards female cap-

tives deserves particular notice. The beautiful slave might not be hurried, as was the case during those ages falsely called heroic, in the agony of sorrow, perhaps reeking with the blood of her murdered relatives, to the bed of the conqueror. She was allowed a month for decent sorrow: if, after that, she became the wife of her master, he might not capriciously abandon her, and sell her to another; she might claim her freedom as the price of her humiliation.

To the generally humane character of the Mosaic legislation, there appears one great exception, the sanguinary and relentless conduct enjoined against the seven Canaanitish nations. Towards them mercy was a crime—extermination a duty. It is indeed probable, that this war-law, cruel as it seems, was not in the least more barbarous than that of the surrounding nations, more particularly the Canaanites themselves. In this the Hebrews were only not superior to their age. Many incidents in the Jewish history show the horrid atrocities of warfare in Palestine. The mutilation of distinguished captives, and the torture of prisoners in cold blood, were the usual consequences of victory. Adonibezek, one of the native kings, acknowledges that seventy kings, with their thumbs and toes cut off, had gathered their meat under his table. The invasion and conquest once determined, no alternative remained, but to extirpate or be extirpated. The dangers and evils to which the Hebrew tribes were subsequently exposed by the weakness or humanity which induced them to suspend their work of extermination, before it had been fully completed, clearly show the political

wisdom by which those measures were dictated : cruel as they were, the war once commenced, they were inevitable. Their right to invade and take possession of Palestine depended solely on their divine commission, and their grant from the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth ; for any other right—deduced from the possession of the patriarchs, who never were owners of more than the sepulchres they purchased ; and, if they had any better title, had forfeited it by the abeyance of many centuries—is untenable and preposterous. Almighty Providence determined to extirpate a race of bloody, licentious, and barbarous idolaters, and replace them by a people of milder manners and purer religion. Instead of the earthquake, the famine, or the pestilence, the ferocious valour of this yet uncivilized people was allowed free scope. The war, in which the Hebrew tribes were embarked, was stripped of none of its customary horrors and atrocities ; nor was it till these savage and unrelenting passions had fulfilled their task, that the influence of their milder institutions was to soften and humanize the national character. Such was the scheme, which, if not, as we assert, really authorized by the Supreme Being, must have been created within the daring and comprehensive mind of the Hebrew legislator. He undertook to lead a people through a long and dreadful career of bloodshed and massacre. The conquest once achieved, they were to settle down into a nation of peaceful husbandmen, under a mild and equal constitution. Up to a certain point they were to be trained in the worst possible discipline for peaceful citizens ; to encourage every disposition oppo-

site to those inculcated by the general spirit of the law. Their ambition was inflamed; military habits formed; the love of restless enterprize fostered; the habit of subsisting upon plunder encouraged. The people, who were to be merciful to the meanest beast, were to mutilate the noblest animal, the horse, wherever they met it: those who were not to exercise any oppression whatever towards a stranger of another race, an Edomite, or even towards their ancient enemy—an Egyptian; on the capture of a Canaanitish city, were to put man, woman, and child to the sword. Their enemies were designated; appointed limits fixed to their conquests: beyond a certain boundary the ambitious invasion, which before was a virtue, became a crime. The whole victorious nation was suddenly to pause in its career. Thus far they were to be like hordes of Tartars, Scythians, or Huns, bursting irresistibly from their deserts, and sweeping away every vestige of human life: at a given point their arms were to fall from their hands; the thirst of conquest subside; and a great unambitious agricultural republic—with a simple religion, an equal administration of justice, a thriving and industrious population, brotherly harmony and mutual goodwill between all ranks; domestic virtues, purity of morals, gentleness of manners—was to arise in the midst of the desolation their arms had made; and under the very roofs—in the vineyards and corn-fields—which they had obtained by merciless violence.

The sanction on which the Hebrew law was founded, is, if possible, more extraordinary. The lawgiver—educated in Egypt, where the immor-



talities of the soul, under some form, most likely that of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of the soul, entered into the popular belief—nevertheless maintained a profound silence on that fundamental article, if not of political, at least of religious legislation—rewards and punishments in another life. He substituted temporal chastisements and temporal blessings. On the violation of the constitution, followed inevitably blighted harvests, famine, pestilence, barrenness among their women, defeat, captivity; on its maintenance, abundance, health, fruitfulness, victory, independence. How wonderfully the event verified the prediction of the inspired legislator—how invariably apostasy led to adversity—repentance and reformation to prosperity—will abundantly appear during the course of the following history.

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## BOOK IV.

### THE INVASION.

*Advance to the Holy Land—Repulse—Residence in the Desert—Second Advance—Conquests to the East of the Jordan—Death and Character of Moses.*



At length the twelve tribes broke up their encampment in the elevated region about Mount Sinai. A year and a month had elapsed since their departure from Egypt. The nation assumed the appearance of a regular army ; military order and discipline were established ; each tribe marched in succession under its own leaders, with its banner displayed, and took up its position in the appointed quarter of the camp. When the silver trumpets sounded, the tribe of Judah, mustering 74,600 fighting men, defiled forward from the east side of the camp, and led the van, followed by Issachar, with 54,400, and Zebulun, 57,400. Then came a division of the tribe of Levi, the descendants of Gershom and Merari, bearing the tabernacle, which was carefully taken down, and, thus moving after the advanced guard, might be set up, ready for the reception of the ark. Then Reuben, numbering, 46,500, Simeon 59,300, Gad 45,650, broke up, and advanced from the southern part of the encampment. The second division of the Levites, the family of Kohath, next took their station, bearing the sanctuary and the ark, and all the sacred vessels, with the most religious care, lest any hands but those of Aaron and his assistants should touch a single part. All the males of the house of Levi amounted only to 22,000. Ephraim 40,500, Manasseh 32,200, Benjamin 35,400, defiled, and formed the western wing of

the encampment, Dan 62,700, Asher 41,500, Napthali 53,400, brought up the rear. The whole number of fighting men was 603,550 \*. This

\* Of the difficulties and discrepancies which occur in the sacred writings of the Hebrews, perhaps two-thirds are found in passages which contain numbers. Of the primitive Hebrew system of notation we are most likely ignorant; but the manner in which the numbers are denoted in the present copies of the sacred books, is remarkably liable to error and misapprehension. (See dissertation in the last edition of Calmet.) It is by no means easy to reconcile the enormous numbers, contained in the census, with the language of other passages in the Scriptures, particularly that of the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy. The nation which could arm 600,000 fighting men is described as "the fewest of all people," as inferior in numbers, it should seem, to each of the seven "greater and mightier nations" which then inhabited Canaan. And it is remarkable, that while there has been much controversy, whether the whole area of Palestine could contain the Hebrew settlers, the seven nations are "to be put out by little and little, lest the beasts of the field increase upon" the new occupants. The narrative of the campaign, in the book of Joshua, is equally inconsistent with these immense numbers; *e. g.*—the defiling of the whole army of 600,000 men, seven times in one day, round the walls of Jericho; the panic of the whole host at the repulse of 3000 men before Ai. The general impression from this book is, that it describes the invasion of nations, at once more warlike and numerous, by a smaller force, which, without reliance on divine succour, could not have achieved the conquest; rather than the irruption of an host, like that of Attila or Zengis, which might have borne down all opposition by the mere weight of numerical force. We have not, however, thought fit to depart from the numbers as they stand in the sacred writings; though, if we might suppose that a cypher has been added in the total sum, and throughout the several particulars; or if we might include men, women, and children under the 600,000, the history would gain, in our opinion, both in clearness and consistency. It may be added, that the number of the first-born (Numb. iii. 43) is quite out of proportion to that of the adult males.

formidable army set forward singing, "*Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered;*" and thus—already furnished with their code of laws, irresistible both in their numbers and the promised assistance of their God—they marched onward to take possession of the fruitful land, which had been promised as the reward of their toils. The cloud still led the way; but their prudent leader likewise secured the assistance of Hobab, his brother-in-law, who, at the head of his clan, had been accustomed to traverse the desert, knew intimately the bearings of the country, the usual resting-places, the water-springs, and the character and habits of the wandering tribes.

Their march was not uninterrupted by adventures. At Taberah a fire broke out, which raged with great fury among the dry and combustible materials of which their tents were made. The people trembled before the manifest anger of the Lord: the destructive flames ceased at the prayer of Moses. Not long after, (at a place subsequently called Kibroth Hattaavah) discontent and mutiny began to spread in the camp. The manna, on which they had long fed, began to pall upon the taste. With something of that feeling which reminds us of sailors who have been long at sea, they began to remember the flesh, the fish, and particularly the juicy and cooling fruits and vegetables which abounded in Egypt, a species of lotus, a favourite food among the lower orders, and the water-melon, the great luxury of southern climates. The discontents rose so high that, to strengthen the authority of the leader, a permanent council of seventy elders was appointed: the mo-

del, and, as the Jews assert, the origin, of their famous Sanhedrin. Still Moses doubted whether it might not be necessary to satisfy the mutinous spirits by slaying all the flocks and herds, which had hitherto been religiously reserved for sacrifices. By divine command he promised an immediate supply of food; but at the same time warned them of the fatal consequences which would attend the gratification of their appetites. Quails again fell in great abundance around the camp; but immediately on this change of diet, or even before, if we are to receive the account to the strict letter, a dreadful pestilence broke out. It has been suggested, that quails feed on hellebore, and other poisonous plants, and may thus become most pernicious and deadly food. The place was called Kibroth Hattaavah, the graves of the greedy after food. During the height of this mutiny, the leader received unexpected assistance from two of the seventy, Eldad and Medad, who, of their own accord, began to prophesy, to speak in the name of God, or to testify their religious zeal by some peculiar and enthusiastic language. Far from reproving with jealous indignation these intruders on his own spiritual function, the prudent leader commended their zeal, and expressed his desire that it might spread throughout the nation.

At their next stage new difficulties arose—jealousy and dissension within the family of the lawgiver. Miriam, the sister of Moses, who, from the prominent part she took in the rejoicings on the shore of the Red Sea, seems to have been the acknowledged head of the female community, found, or supposed herself, supplanted in dignity



by the Arabian (Ethiopian) wife of Moses—whether Zipporah, or a second wife, is not quite clear. Aaron espoused her quarrel; but the authority of Moses, and the impartiality of the law, were at once vindicated. The offenders were summoned before the tabernacle, and rebuked by the voice from the cloud. The mutinous Miriam was smitten with leprosy, and cast, like a common person, out of the camp, till she should have completed the legal term of purification.

At length the nation arrived on the southern frontier of the promised land, at a place called Kadesh Barnea. Their wanderings are now drawn to an end, and they are to reap the reward of all their toil and suffering, the final testimony of the divine favour. Twelve spies, one from each tribe, are sent out to make observations on the fruitfulness of the land, the character of the inhabitants, and the strength of their fortifications. Among these, the most distinguished are, Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, of Ephraim. During the forty days of their absence the assembled people anxiously await their return; and at length they are seen advancing towards the camp, loaded with delicious fruits, for it was now about the time of the vintage. In one respect, their report is most satisfactory: Canaan had undergone great improvement since the time when Abraham and Jacob had pastured their flocks in the open and unoccupied plains. The vine, the olive, the pomegranate, and the fig, were cultivated with great success; and the rich sample which they bear—a bunch of grapes, almost as much as two men can carry, suspended from a pole, with figs and pomegranates—confirms

their cheering narrative. But, on the other hand, the intelligence, exaggerated by the fears of ten out of the twelve spies, overwhelms the whole people with terror. These treasures were guarded by fierce and warlike tribes, not likely to abandon their native plains without an obstinate and bloody contest. Their cities were strongly fortified; and above all, nearly the first enemies they would have to encounter would be men of colossal stature, the descendants of the gigantic people, celebrated in their early national traditions, people before whom they would be *as grasshoppers*. The inhabitants of Egypt are in general of small stature; and the same causes which tended to the rapid increase of the Jewish people in that country were unfavourable to their height and vigour. But, worse than this, their long slavery had debased their minds: the confidence in the divine protection gave way at once before their sense of physical inferiority, and the total deficiency of moral courage. "*Back to Egypt*," is the general cry. The brave Joshua and Caleb in vain reprove the general pusillanimity; their own lives are in danger; and, in bitter disappointment, the great lawgiver perceives that a people accustomed to the luxuries of a relaxing climate, and inured to slavery from their birth, are not the materials from which he can construct a bold, conquering, and independent nation. But his great mind is equal even to those dispiriting circumstances; and, in all the wonderful history of the Jews, perhaps nothing is more extraordinary, or more clearly evinces his divine inspiration, and confident reliance on the God in whose name he spoke, than his conduct on this

trying occasion. The decision is instantaneously formed; the plan of immediate conquest at once abandoned; the people are commanded, on the authority of God, to retreat directly from the borders of the promised land. They are neither to return to Egypt, nor assail an easier conquest; but they are condemned to wander for a definite period of forty years, in the barren and dismal regions through which they had marched. No hope is held out that their lives shall be prolonged; they are distinctly assured that not one of them shall receive those blessings, on the promise of which they had surrendered themselves to the guidance of Moses, abandoned Egypt, and traversed the wilderness. Even Moses, himself, at the age of eighty, acquiesces in the discouraging apprehension, that he never shall enjoy the reward of his honourable and patriotic ambition—the pride and satisfaction of seeing his republic happily established in the land of Canaan. A desperate access of valour, or an impatient desire of beholding once, at least, the pleasant land, in vain repressed by their leader, brought the Hebrews into collision with their enemies. Those who ascended the hill, were fiercely assailed by the native warriors, and driven back to the main body with great loss. All the spies, except the faithful two, were cut off by an untimely death, a pestilence sent from God. Nothing remained, but in sullen resignation to follow their inexorable leader into that country in which they were to spend their lives and find their graves—the desert.

Yet, however signal this evidence of the authority acquired by Moses over the minds of the

people, the first incident during the retreat showed a dangerous and widely-organized plan of rebellion. A formidable conspiracy was made to wrest the supreme civil power from Moses, and the priesthood from his brother. Korah, a Levite of the race of Kohath, announced himself as the competitor of the latter : Dathan, Abiram, and On, all descended from Reuben, rested their claim to pre-eminence on the primogeniture of their ancestor—the forfeiture of whose title they did not acknowledge : 250 of the chieftains engaged in the rebellion. Moses confidently appealed to God, and rested his own claim, and that of his brother, on the issue. The earth suddenly opened, and swallowed up the tents of the Reubenite mutineers. Korah and his abettors were struck dead by fire from heaven. The people, instead of being overawed and confounded by these dreadful events, expressed their pity and indignation. The plague immediately broke out, by which 14,700 perished. Another miracle left Aaron in undisputed possession of the priestly office. Twelve rods, one for the prince of each tribe, were laid up in the tabernacle : that of Aaron alone budded, and produced the flowers and fruits of a living branch of the almond tree.

Of the Hebrew history, during the period of thirty-eight years passed in the wilderness, nothing is known, except the names of their stations.\* Most of these, probably, were in the elevated dis-

\* Burckhardt expresses his regret, that the old Hebrew names of places in this region have almost invariably given place to more modern Arabian ones.

trict around Mount Sinai, which is about thirty miles in diameter, the most fruitful and habitable part of the peninsula. There the tribes would find water, and pasture for their flocks and cattle. Their own labours, and traffic with the caravans which crossed this region, would supply most of their wants. In short, their life was that of the Bedouins of the desert.

An opinion, advanced by Eusebius, has been recently revived—that, during this time, the great Egyptian conqueror, Sesostris, mounted the throne, and extended his victorious arms over a great part of the world. Should future discoveries in the hieroglyphical literature of Egypt throw light on this subject, it would be a remarkable fact, that the Israelites should have escaped, in the unassailable desert, the conquering and avenging power of their former masters.

At length, when the former generation had gradually sunk into the grave, and a new race had sprung up, trained to the bold and hardy habits of the wandering Arab—when the free air of the desert had invigorated their frames, and the canker of slavery had worn out of their minds—while they retained much of the arts and knowledge acquired in Egypt—the Hebrew nation suddenly appeared again at Kadesh; the same point on the southern frontier of Palestine, from which they had retreated. At this place Miriam died, and was buried with great honour. The whole camp was distressed from want of water, and was again miraculously supplied. Here, likewise, Moses himself betrayed his mistrust in the divine assistance; and the final sentence was issued, that he should not lead the



nation into the possession of the promised land. Many formidable difficulties opposed their penetrating into Canaan on this frontier. The country was mountainous; the hills crowned with strong forts, which, like Jerusalem, then Jebus, long defied their arms, and were not finally subdued till the reign of David. It was not the most fruitful or inviting district of the land; part of it was the wild region where David afterwards maintained himself with his freebooting companions, when persecuted by Saul. The gigantic clan about Hebron would be almost the first to oppose them; and the Philistines who occupied the coast, the most warlike of the tribes, might fall on their rear. They determine therefore to make a circuit; to pass round the Dead Sea, and crossing the Jordan, proceed at once into the heart of the richest and least defensible part of the land. To effect this march they must cross the deep valley which, under the name of El Ghor and El Araba, extends from the foot of the Dead Sea to the gulf of Elath. On the eastern side of this valley rises a lofty and precipitous ridge, Mount Seir, still called Djebal Shera, traversed only by a few narrow defiles; one only, called El Ghoeyr, passable by a large army. This ridge was occupied by the Edomites; and Moses sends to demand free passage through the country, under a strict promise to keep the high way (the Ghoeyr), and commit no ravage or act of hostility. While this negotiation was pending, one of the Canaanitish chieftains, Arad, made a bold and sudden attack on their outposts. He was repulsed, pursued into his own country, and some of his towns taken. But this



advantage did not tempt them to alter their plan ; and when the Edomites not merely refused, but appeared in great force to oppose their passage, no alternative remained, but to march southward along the valley of El Araba, and turn the ridge where it is very low, close to the branch of the Red Sea. Before they commenced this march, Aaron died, and was buried on Mount Hor. His place of burial is still pointed out by the natives, with every appearance of truth. Josephus fixes the position of Mount Hor a short distance to the west of Petra, the capital of the Nabathean Arabs. The ruins of this city were discovered by Burckhardt ; and, exactly in the position pointed out by the Jewish historian, he was shown the burying-place of Aaron. Marching along the valley, due south, the Israelites arrived at a district dreadfully infested by serpents, " sent among them," in the language of the sacred volume, " as a punishment for their renewed murmurs." An adjacent region, visited by Burckhardt, is still dangerous on this account. Moses caused a serpent of brass to be made : by stedfastly gazing on this mysterious emblem, whoever had been bitten, was miraculously restored to health.

From the end of the ridge, near the gulf of Elath, their march turned northward. The Edomites, taken in flank on the open side of their country, offered no resistance, and the army advanced into the territory of the Moabites. This tribe had been weakened by an unsuccessful war against the Amorites, their northern neighbours, who had pushed their own frontier to the river Arnon. The Israelites passed without opposition

through the district of Moab, till they reached that stream, now called the Modjeb, which flows in a deep bed, with steep and barren banks. Before they violated the territory of the Amorites, they sent a peaceful message to Sihon, their king, requesting free passage on the same terms offered to the Edomites. The answer was warlike: a bloody battle took place, which decided the fate of the Amoritish kingdom; and the victorious Israelites advanced to the brook Jabbok, which divided the Amorites from the Ammonites, who lay to the eastward, and Bashan which extended along the banks of the Jordan, and the lake of Gennesareth. Og, the chieftain of the latter district, was of a gigantic stature. His iron bedstead, or the iron framework of the divan on which he used to recline, was nine feet long.\* But the terror of these formidable antagonists had now passed. Og was defeated; his cities were taken, Argob, his capital, fell: and thus two decisive battles made the Israelites masters of the whole eastern bank of the Jordan, and of the lake of Gennesareth. Still the promised land remained unattempted; and the conquerors drew near the river, at no great distance above its influx into the Dead Sea, in a level district, belonging to the Moabites, nearly opposite to Jericho.

The Moabites hitherto had made no resistance; now, in the utmost apprehension, they sent to entreat succour from their more powerful neighbours, the tribes of Midian, who were scattered in dif-

\* The cubit here is not the sacred cubit, one foot nine inches long, but the natural cubit.

ferent parts of northern Arabia, but lay in the greatest strength to the south-east of Moab, beyond the line on which the Israelites had advanced. Their messengers recounted the fearful numbers of the invaders in language singularly expressive to a people of herdsmen, *They shall lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass.* But they looked for more effective succour than the armed squadrons of Midian. The march of the Israelites had rather the appearance of a religious procession than of a warlike invasion. In the centre of the camp, instead of the sumptuous pavilion of their emir or king, arose the consecrated tent of their God. Their leader openly avowed a sacred and inspired character. Their battle-cry denounced their adversaries as the enemies of their God, who was to arise and scatter them. Would the gods of Moab and Midian, who seem to have been closely connected in their religious belief, interfere in their behalf? Could not some favourite of heaven be found who might balance the fortunes of the Hebrew chieftain, and rescue the natives from their otherwise inevitable servitude? There lived near the river Euphrates a religious man, whose reputation for sanctity extended through all the tribes between that river and the Jordan. The imprecations of Balaam might arrest that tide of victory, which the prayers and sacrifices of Moses had obtained for his people; the disheartened warriors under the influence of their own prophet, would take courage to encounter again the fierce enthusiasm of the invaders; and in the strength and under the protection of their own deities, the contest might be renewed with con-

fidence of success. But Balaam at once rejects the invitation of Balak, king of Moab, and declares that the God of the Israelites forbade him to take part against them. Again, the Moabites send a more urgent request by ambassadors of still higher rank, accompanied with gifts far more costly than they had offered, as the customary present, on the former occasion. At first Balaam refuses, alleging the same insuperable reason, the interdiction laid upon him by the powers of heaven. At length he consents to set forth, and Balak, king of Moab, receives him with the highest honour in one of his frontier cities. But the prophet came not with the lofty mien and daring language of an interpreter of the Divine Will, confident in the success of his oracular predictions. Strange prodigies, he related, had arrested him on his journey; an angel had appeared in his way; the beast on which he rode had spoken with a human voice, and whether favourable or unfavourable to the cause of Balak, he could only utter what he was commanded from on high. Balak first led him to an eminence sacred to the god of the country; here the king and the prophet built seven altars, a mystical number, sacred among many people, and on each altar offered a bullock and a ram. Balaam then retired apart to another holy and perhaps more open eminence, to await the inspiration. He cast his eyes below; he saw the countless multitudes of the Israelitish tents whitening the whole plain to an immense distance. Awe-struck, he returned to the king, and in wild oracular poetry, began to foretell the splendid fortunes of the people whom he was called upon to curse. Balak carried him to another

eminence, where, as if he apprehended that the numbers of the enemy had appalled the mind of the prophet, he could only see a part of their camp. Again the sacrifice is offered, again the prophet retires, and comes back unfolding, in still more vivid strains, the irresistible might of the people whose cause God so manifestly espouses. A third time the trial is made. On the mountain which was the sanctuary of Peor, or from which, as his most sacred place, the great national god received his name, a third sacrifice is offered. But here the prophet did not, as before, retire to perform his private rites of divination. The trance fell on him at once, and he broke out in admiration of the beautiful order in which the tents of Israel were arrayed, magnified their force, and foretold their uninterrupted career of victory. In vain the king remonstrated. The language assumed a still higher strain and a more mysterious import; the glory of Israel, the total discomfiture of all their adversaries, was the burthen of his song. On the one side he beheld the mighty and regular army of Israel, on the other the few and scattered troops of some of the native tribes. On the latter he denounced ruin and destruction, on the former the most splendid destiny which prophetic language could unfold. The general belief of the Jews has dwelt on these mysterious words, *I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel*, as foretelling that great king and conqueror, the Messiah, who was to discomfit the enemies of the Jewish people, and establish their universal and permanent dominion.



But the perverse and venal mind of Balaam was little affected by his own predictions ; he gave advice to the native princes more fatal than all his imprecations could have been. While the Israelites lay still encamped under the acacia groves in the plains near the Jordan, the festival of the Midianites approached, in which their maidens were accustomed to prostitute themselves, like the Babylonians and others of the eastern tribes, in honour of their deity. To these impure and flagitious rites, celebrated probably with voluptuous dances and effeminate music, the Israelites are invited : they fall into the snare, they join in the idolatrous sacrifices, partake of the forbidden banquets, worship the false gods, even their princes are corrupted, and the contagion reaches the camp. Zimri, a Simeonite of high rank, publicly leads to his tent the daughter of a Midianitish chieftain. In this dangerous emergency the conduct of the lawgiver is, as usual, prompt and decisive. The judges are commanded to pronounce the capital sentence enacted in the law. Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest, seized with holy indignation, transfixes the Simeonite and his mistress in each other's arms. No sooner had this been done, than the pestilence ceased which had broken out in the camp, and by which 24,000 persons had died. The tribes of Midian paid a dreadful penalty for this insidious and unprovoked attempt on the prosperity of the Israelites : 12,000 chosen warriors, 1,000 from each tribe, made a rapid descent on their country, carried fire and sword into every quarter destroyed their towns, slew their kings, cut off all their males with the sword, not sparing those of their women who



had been the cause of the war, and reserving only the young female virgins as slaves. In the general massacre fell Balaam the prophet. The booty in cattle and slaves was immense; 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves, 61,000 asses, 32,000 female slaves. This was divided into two equal portions, one half assigned to the combatants, the other to the rest of the people. From the share of the combatants a five hundredth part, a fiftieth part from that of the people, was deducted for the sacred treasury committed to the care of the priests and Levites.

After this conquest some of the Israelites began to think that they had done enough. The tribes of Reuben and Gad, addicted to a pastoral life, and rich in flocks and herds, could desire no fairer possession than the luxuriant meadows of Bashan, and the sloping pastures of Gilead. They demanded their portion of the land on the east of the Jordan. The lawgiver assented to their request on the condition that their warriors, leaving their women and their flocks behind, should cross the river, and assist their brethren in the conquest of Palestine. Accordingly the whole conquered territory was assigned to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

At length the termination of the forty years approached, the appointed period at which the Israelites were to enter into the promised land. But the triumph of the people was to be preceded by the death of the lawgiver. He was to behold, not to enter the promised land. Once he had sinned from want of confidence in the Divine assistance; the penalty affixed to his offence was now exacted. As his end approached, he summoned the assembly of all Israel to receive his

final instructions. His last thoughts were the welfare of the commonwealth, and the permanence of the constitution. Already the people had been numbered for the third time ; they were found not to have increased or decreased very materially since the departure from Egypt. Moses recounted their whole eventful history since their deliverance, their toils, their dangers, their triumphs ; he recapitulated and consolidated in one brief code, the book of Deuteronomy, the whole law, in some degree modified and adapted to the future circumstances of the republic. Finally he appointed a solemn ratification of the law, which although it was not to take place, nor did take place, till after the conquest, yet, is so deeply impressed with the genius and lofty character of the inspired lawgiver, that it may be better to relate it here, than at the time, when it was fulfilled under the direction of Joshua.

Never did human imagination conceive a scene so imposing, so solemn, so likely to impress the whole people with deep and enduring awe, as the final ratification of their polity, commanded by the dying lawgiver. In the territory, afterwards assigned to the tribe of Ephraim, a central region, stand two remarkable mountains, separated by a deep and narrow ravine, in which the ancient Sechem, the modern Naplous, stands. Here all Israel was to be assembled, six tribes on one height, six on the other. In the open day, and in a theatre, as it were, created by the God of nature for the express purpose, after a sacrifice offered on an altar of stones, the people of Israel testified their free and deliberate acceptance of that constitution which their God had enacted. They accepted it

with its inseparable conditions, maledictions the most awful, which they imprecated on their own heads, in case they should apostatize from its statutes—blessings, equally ample and perpetual, if they should adhere to its holy and salutary provisions. The type of either destiny lay before them: Mount Ebal was a barren, stony, arid, and desolate crag; Gerizim, a lovely and fertile height, with luxuriant verdure, streams of running water, and cool and shady groves.\* As God had blasted Ebal, so he would smite the disobedient with barrenness, hunger, and misery; as he crowned Gerizim with beauty and fruitfulness, so he would bless the faithful Israelites with abundance, with peace, with happiness. On Mount Ebal—as the Levites read the heads of the prohibitory statutes, and denounced the curse against the idolater, the oppressor, the adulterer, the unnatural son, the incestuous, the murderer—the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Napthali, with one voice, which was echoed back from the opposite height, responded Amen, so be it. On Gerizim stood the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, as the blessings of the law were recited, to give the same unreserved assent.

Having thus appointed all the circumstances of this impressive scene, the lawgiver himself enlarged on the blessings of obedience; but with a dark and melancholy foreboding of the final destiny

\* Whether the sacrifice was offered on Ebal or Gerizim was a question long contested with the greatest acrimony by the Jews and Samaritans, each appealing to their own copy of the law.

of his people, he laid before them still more at length the consequences of apostacy and wickedness. The sublimity of his denunciations surpasses any thing in the oratory or the poetry of the whole world. Nature is exhausted in furnishing terrific images; nothing, excepting the real horrors of the Jewish history—the miseries of their sieges, the cruelty, the contempt, the oppressions, the persecutions, which, for ages, this scattered and despised and detested nation have endured—can approach the tremendous maledictions which warned them against the violation of their law. *The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee till thou be destroyed..... And thou shalt become an astonishment, and a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. A nation of fierce countenance..... shall besiege thee in all thy gates,..... and thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee..... And among the nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; for the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and*

*thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.* The sequel of our history must furnish a most awful comment on these terrific denunciations.

And now closing, at length, his admonitions, his warnings, and his exhortations to repentance—having renewed the covenant with the whole nation from the highest to the lowest, *from the prince to the hewer of wood and drawer of water*—having committed the law to the custody of the Levites, and appointed the valiant Joshua as his successor—finally, having enriched the national poetry with an ode worthy of him who composed the hymn of triumph by the Red Sea—Moses ascended the loftiest eminence in the neighbourhood, in order that he might once behold, before his eyes closed for ever, the land of promise. From the top of Mount Abarim, or Nebo, the former of which names may perhaps be traced in Djebel Attarous, the highest point in the district, the lawgiver, whose eyes were not yet dimmed, and who had suffered none of the infirmities of age, might survey a large tract of country. To the right lay the mountain pastures of Gilead, the romantic district of Bashan; the windings of the Jordan might be traced along its broad and level valley, till, almost beneath his feet, it flowed into the Dead Sea. To the north, spread the luxuriant



plains of Esdraelon, the more hilly, yet fruitful country of Lower Galilee. Right opposite stood the city of Jericho, embowered in its groves of palms—beyond it the mountains of Judæa, rising above each other till they reached the sea. Gazing on this magnificent prospect, beholding in prophetic anticipation his great and happy commonwealth occupying its numerous towns and blooming fields, Moses breathed his last. The place of his burial was unknown, lest, perhaps, the impious gratitude of his followers might ascribe divine honours to his name, and assemble to worship at his sepulchre.

Such was the end of the Hebrew lawgiver—a man, who, considered merely in an historical light, without any reference to his divine inspiration, has exercised a more extensive and permanent influence over the destinies of his own nation and mankind at large, than any other individual recorded in the annals of the world. Christianity and Mahometanism alike respect, and, in different degrees, derive their origin from the Mosaic institutes. Thus, throughout Europe, with all its American descendants—the larger part of Asia, and the north of Africa—the opinions, the usages, the civil as well as religious ordinances—retain deep and indelible traces of their descent from the Hebrew polity. To his own nation, Moses was chieftain, historian, poet, lawgiver. He was more than all these—he was the author of their civil existence. Other founders of republics, and distinguished legislators, have been, like Numa, already at the head of a settled and organized community; or have been voluntarily invested with legislative



authority, like Charondas, Lycurgus, and Solon, by a people suffering the inconveniences of anarchy. Moses had first to form his people, and bestow on them a country of their own before he could create his commonwealth. The Hebrews would either have been absorbed in the population of Egypt, or remained a wretched Pariah caste, had Moses never lived, or never received his divine commission. In this condition he took them up, rescued them from captivity: finding them unfit for his purpose, he kept them for forty years under the severe discipline of the desert; then led them as conquerors to take permanent possession of a most fruitful region. Yet, with singular disregard to his own fame, though with great advantage to his design, Moses uniformly referred to an earlier and more remote personage the dignity of parent of his people. The Jews were children of Abraham, not of Moses; they were a distinguished nation as descendants of the patriarch, not as compatriots of the lawgiver. The virtue of pure and disinterested patriotism never shone forth more unclouded. He nobly declined the offer made to him by the Almighty, to substitute his own family for the offending race of Israel. The permanent happiness of the whole people was the one great object to which the life of Moses was devoted; so that, if we could for an instant suspect, that he made use of religion for a political purpose, still that purpose would entitle him to the highest rank among the benefactors of mankind, as having been the first who attempted to regulate society by an equal written law. If God was not the sovereign of the Jewish state, the law was: the

best, and only safe, vicegerent of Almighty Providence, to which the welfare of human communities can be entrusted. If the Hebrew commonwealth was not a theocracy, it was a nomocracy. On the other hand, if, as we suppose, in the Mosaic polity the civil was subordinate to the religious end, still the immediate well-being of the community was not sacrificed to the more remote object. Independent of the temporal blessings promised to the maintenance of the law, the Hebrew commonwealth was so constituted, as to produce (all circumstances of the times, the situation and character of the people considered) as much, or more, real happiness and independence than any existing or imaginary government of ancient times. Let Moses, as contrasted with human legislators, be judged according to his age, he will appear, not merely the first who founded a commonwealth on just principles, but a lawgiver, who advanced political society to as high a degree of perfection, as the state of civilization which his people had attained, or were capable of attaining, could possibly admit. But if such be the benign, the prematurely wise, and original character of the Mosaic institutions, the faith of the Jew and the Christian in the divine commission of the great legislator is the more strongly established and confirmed.



# CANAAN.

with the  
Divisions  
of the  
TRIBES.



## BOOK V.

### THE CONQUEST.

*Joshua assumes the Command—Passage of the Jordan—  
Capture of Jericho—War with the Canaanites of the  
South—and of the North—Partition of the Land—Law  
of Property.*





THE lawgiver had done his part; the warrior succeeded to the administration of affairs, and to the directing intercourse with divine Providence. For thirty days Israel lamented the death of Moses, and then prepared themselves to fulfil his dying instructions. The first military operation of Joshua was to send spies to gain intelligence, and to survey the strength of Jericho, the most powerful city near the place where he proposed to cross the Jordan. The spies entered the city, and took up their lodging in the house of a woman who kept a public caravansary. The king sent to apprehend them; but Rahab, the mistress of the house, struck with religious terror at the conquests of the Jews, and acknowledging the superiority of their God, concealed them, and provided them with means of escape, letting them down the city wall, on which her house stood, and directing them to fly by the opposite road to that which their pursuers had taken. She received a promise, that on the capture of the city the lives of herself and her family should be spared. She was commanded to mark her house by a scarlet line hanging from the window. The spies brought word that the success of the Hebrew arms had struck terror into the native princes; and Joshua immediately gave orders to effect the passage of the river. The entrance into the promised land was made with

suitable solemnity, not in the usual order of march. Instead of occupying its secure central position, the ark of God, borne by the Levites, advanced to the van. This was a bold and dangerous measure. Joshua had no security against a sudden movement, or a secret ambush of the enemy, which might surprise the sacred coffer, and thus annihilate the hopes, by extinguishing the religious courage of the people. The ark moved forward to the bank of the river; the whole army—for the warriors of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, leaving their families and flocks behind, assembled in the common enterprize—followed at the distance of more than three-quarters of a mile. In the spring, the Jordan is swollen by the early rains, and by the melting of the snow on Mount Lebanon. In its ordinary channel, it is described by Pococke, as being about the breadth of the Thames at Windsor, deep and rapid; but, during its inundation, it forms a second bed, of much greater width, the boundaries of which, according to Maundrell, may be distinctly traced. It was now the season of the flood; but no sooner had the priests, bearing the ark, entered the river, than the descending waters were arrested, the channel became dry, and the whole army—while the ark remained in the centre of the river—passed in safety to the western bank. They encamped in a place named Gilgal; there they kept the fortieth passover since its first institution in Egypt. A rude monument, formed of twelve stones from the bed of the river, was set up to commemorate their wonderful passage; all who had not undergone circumcision, were initiated by that rite into the commonwealth; and

here the manna, on which they had fed in the desert, entirely failed.

Palestine was at this time governed by a multitude of petty independent kings, who were appalled by this sudden invasion, not of a hostile tribe in quest of plunder, or of a neighbouring monarch, with the design of reducing the country to a tributary province; but of a whole people, advancing with the obvious and avowed intention of obtaining a permanent settlement. The extraordinary circumstances which attended the march of the Israelites did not abate their fears. But their fears neither taught them prudence nor unanimity. At first they entered into no league to resist the common enemy; each kingdom or city was left to make the best defence in its power. The storm first broke upon Jericho; a city standing at the extremity of a plain, which slopes to the Jordan, encircled on every side by an amphitheatre of hills, which almost overhang it with their precipitous cliffs. The inhabitants of Jericho prudently awaited behind their walls the approach of the enemy. To their surprise, no attempt was made to scale the walls, or force the gates. They saw what might seem a peaceful procession going regularly round the walls of the city. The army marched first, in total silence. In the rear came the ark, escorted by seven priests, blowing seven trumpets, made of rams' horns. For six successive days this mysterious circuit took place; no voice was heard from the vast and breathless army—nothing but the shrill wailing of the trumpet. On the seventh day, this extraordinary ceremony was repeated seven times. At the close

of the last round, the whole army on a sudden set up a tremendous shout, the walls of the city fell, and the defenceless people found the triumphant enemy rushing along their streets. The slaughter was promiscuous and unsparing; not merely human life, but the beasts of labour were destroyed. Rahab and her family alone escaped. The city was devoted to perpetual desolation, and a malediction imprecated upon the head of him who should attempt to rebuild it.

The capture of Jericho was of great importance; for the art of besieging towns, however rudely fortified, was yet in its infancy. The cities to the east of the Jordan had surrendered in consequence of pitched battles in the open field. Some of the hill fortresses, like Jerusalem, were not taken till the reign of David.

In their next expedition, the Israelites suffered a sudden check. Three thousand men marched against the neighbouring city of Ai, but were repulsed with loss. The discomfiture implied the abandonment of their cause by the great Giver of victory—their abandonment, guilt. The lots were cast to discover the offender. The lot of condemnation fell on the tribe of Judah. Among the families of Judah, it fell on the family of the Zarhites—of that family, on the household of Zabdi—of that household, on Achan, the son of Carmi. The criminal confessed that he had purloined from the part of the booty consecrated to God, a rich garment of Babylonian work, and some silver. He was stoned, and his remains, and all his property, burned with fire.

After this signal proof, that no crime could

escape detection, the army set forth, and by a stratagem became masters of Ai. The main body approached the city, and, when the enemy, emboldened by their former success, sallied forth against them, the Israelites, pretending a sudden panic, fled on all sides. The warriors of Ai pursued; but turning back, saw, in utter amazement, their city in a blaze. Joshua had placed 5000 men in ambush, who, rising at an appointed signal, rushed on the town, and, having set it on fire, advanced to take the enemy in the rear, while Joshua, facing about, attacked them in front. The whole people was exterminated, their king hanged.

The great body of the Israelites remained encamped at Gilgal, a central position. Hither in a short time came some travel-tainted men, with mouldy provisions, their wine-skins full of rents, their shoes worn through. They described themselves as coming from a distant country, where the fame of the Jewish conquests had reached them, to tender their humble submission. The Israelites incautiously consented to a treaty; but found shortly that they had been outwitted by the inhabitants of Gibeon (a Canaanitish city) and its dependent villages, which lay at no great distance. The treaty was held sacred; the lives of the Gibeonites spared; but they were degraded into a sort of slaves to the officiating priesthood, in which humble condition we find their descendants at a late period in the history.

A league was now formed among the southern princes of the Amoritish race, five in number, headed by Adonibezek, King of Jerusalem, to revenge the defection of Gibeon, and to arrest the



further progress of the invaders. They attacked the Gibeonites, who sent in all haste to demand assistance. Joshua, by a rapid night-march, fell on the Canaanites, defeated and pursued them with immense slaughter ; while a tremendous hail-storm increased the panic and destruction of the flight. During this pursuit took place that memorable event, the arresting of the sun and moon in their respective courses, at the prayer of Joshua, in order that he might complete the extermination of his flying enemies. Many learned writers, whom to suspect of hostility to revealed religion would be the worst uncharitableness, have either doubted the reality, or the extent of this miracle. Some have supposed the miracle only apparent, and have imagined a preternatural refraction of the sun's rays after it had really sunk below the horizon. The words " about a whole day," during which the sun hastened not to go down, they translate, " after the day was finished." Others conceive that the whole is a highly-wrought poetical passage from the book of Jasher (which there is good reason to believe was the great collection of national lyrics), and hence abounding, according to the genius of Hebrew poetry, with the most daring apostrophes, and delighting in figures drawn from the heavenly bodies. Those who contend for the literal acceptance of the miracle, urge, as its obvious purpose, the giving a death-blow to the prevailing superstition of the country, the worship of the sun and moon. Nor can it be denied that there is something astonishingly sublime in supposing the deities of the conquered people thus arrested in their career, and forced to witness the

discomfiture, and contribute to the extirpation of their worshippers.

After this victory the conquest was rapid and easy : the five kings had fled for refuge to a cave, from which they were taken and put to death ; city after city fell ; tribe after tribe was exterminated. Joshua returned to Gilgal, having completed the subjugation of the south as far as Gaza, with the exception of some of the strong fortresses.

The northern chieftains had looked on with impolitic indifference during the subjugation of the south ; they now saw the tide of conquest roll back upon themselves ; and too late began to prepare for their defence. They organized a powerful confederacy, and pitched their camp near the waters of Merom, probably the Samachonite Lake, the first into which the Jordan flows. Their strength lay in their cavalry and chariots, which, in the central plains and valleys of Palestine, could act with greater effect than in the more mountainous district of the south. Joshua suddenly fell upon them ; and one battle decided the fate of the whole region. The conqueror deliberately destroyed all the chariots, and maimed the horses ; thus wisely incapacitating the people from extending their conquests beyond the borders of Canaan. The war lasted, on the whole, seven years, the latter part of which was consumed in the reduction of the cities. During this period the seven nations—the Canaanites, properly so called—the Amorites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Girgashites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites—were entirely subdued, though not extirpated ; thirty-one kings had fallen under the sword. At the end of

the seven years, the Israelites grew weary of the war; they longed to enjoy the fruits of their victories. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, impatiently demanded to be dismissed to their families and possessions on the east of the Jordan. Fatally for the future peace of the commonwealth, the war was suspended; the conquest remained unfinished; many of the Canaanites remained within the Jewish territory, ready on all occasions to wreak their vengeance on their conquerors; and perpetually weaning the Israelites from their own pure and spiritual faith to the barbarous or licentious rites of idolatry.

The two first objects, after the conquest, were first, the solemn recognition of the law on Mount Ebal and Gerizim, according to the last instructions of Moses. This scene took place with all its imposing circumstances. Secondly, the survey and division of the land, with the location of the tribes.

It is almost impossible to calculate, with accuracy, the area of a country, the frontier of which is irregular on every side. Lowman has given three different estimates of the extent of territory occupied by the twelve tribes; the mean between the two extremes approaches, probably, the nearest to the truth. According to this computation, the Jewish dominion, at the time of the Division, was 180 miles long, by 130 wide, and contained 14,976,000 acres. "This quantity of land will divide, to 600,000 men, about  $21\frac{1}{2}$  acres in property, with a remainder of 1,976,000 acres for the Levitical cities, the princes of tribes, the heads of families, and other public uses." Assuming this estate of  $21\frac{1}{2}$

acres, assigned to each household, of course a larger proportion of pasture must have been given to those tribes who subsisted on their herds and flocks, than of arable to those who lived by tillage ; the portions of the latter, therefore, must be considerably reduced. On the other hand, the extraordinary fertility of the whole country must be taken into the account. No part was waste ; very little was occupied by unprofitable wood ; the more fertile hills were cultivated in artificial terraces, others were hung with orchards of fruit trees ; the more rocky and barren districts were covered with vineyards. Even in the present day, the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil. Galilee, says Malté Brun, would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people, under an enlightened government. No land could be less dependent on foreign importation ; it bore within itself every thing that could be necessary for the subsistence and comfort of a simple agricultural people. The climate was healthy, the seasons regular : the former rains, which fell about October, after the vintage, prepared the ground for the seed ; the latter, which prevailed during March and the beginning of April, made it grow rapidly. Directly the rains ceased, the grain ripened with still greater rapidity, and was gathered in before the end of May. The summer months were dry and very hot, but the nights cool and refreshed by copious dews. In September, the vintage was gathered. Grain of all kinds, wheat, barley, millet, zea, and other sorts, grew in abundance ; the wheat commonly yielded thirty for one. Besides the vine and the olive, the almond, the

date, figs of many kinds, the orange, the pomegranate, and many other fruit trees, flourished in the greatest luxuriance. Great quantity of honey was collected. The balm tree, which produced the opobalsamum, a great object of trade, was probably introduced from Arabia in the time of Solomon. It flourished about Jericho and in Gilead.

By giving a rapid sketch of the territory assigned to each tribe, we shall be enabled to show the political divisions, the boundaries, the more remarkable features in the general surface of the country, and the productions most abundant in each district. Commencing from the Transjordanic possessions, the Israelites' southern border was the river Arnon, which divided the land of the Hebrews from that of Moab. Here the tribe of Reuben received their allotment—the northern bank of the Arnon up to Aroer. It comprehended a large portion of the Ghor, or valley of the Jordan. Its chief cities Heshbon, Eleale, and Sibmah, were famous for their vines. All these towns stood inland in the more mountainous district. The ruins of many of them are still visible, and retain their ancient names, Aroer (Arayer), Heshbon (Hesbon), Eleale (El Aal), Baal Meon (Myoune), Medeba (Madeba). The whole district is called the Belka. The superiority of its pasturage over that of all southern Syria, is the cause that its possession is still fiercely contested by the Arabs. The Bedouins have a saying, “Thou canst not find a country like the Belka.” The beef and mutton of this district are preferred to all others. The tribe of Gad was placed to the north of the Reubenites. It is almost impossible to trace their



boundary to the south. Their land lay on both sides of the Jabbok (the modern Zerka). On the east it extended as far as Rabbath Ammon, afterwards Philadelphia. It contained all the east side of the valley of the Jordan up to the foot of the sea of Gennesareth, and the southern part of the mountain range called Gilead, the name of which, Dje-laad, is still found belonging to a ridge south of the Jabbok; formerly, however, it extended to the whole range from Lebanon to the land of Reuben. Mr. Buckingham was struck with the romantic scenery of this district. Gilead was celebrated for its flocks, and for goats with remarkably fine hair, to which the tresses of the bride, in the song of Solomon, are compared. North again of Gad was settled the half tribe of Manasseh, occupying the eastern shore of the lake of Gennesareth, the whole of Bashan, famous for its vigorous breed of cattle, and probably some part of the fertile corn-lands of the ancient Auranitis, the modern Haouran. This part of the tribe was under the command of Maclir, the eldest descendant of Manasseh.

Within the borders of the promised land, the most northern point, at the foot of Lebanon, and near the fountain of the Jordan, was occupied by part of the tribe of Dan, who, finding themselves straitened in their quarters, migrated and took the town of Laish, which assumed the name of their tribe. Next came Naphtali, its possessions probably running up into the delightful valleys of the Anti-Libanus. To Asher was assigned the sea coast, a long and narrow slip of land, from the frontiers of Sidon, all round the noble bay of Ptolemais, excepting where it was broken by part of the territory of Zebulun, to

Carmel, including the mountain and part of the rich valley at its foot. But the sea ports, Achzib (Ecdippa) and Acco, (the celebrated Ptolemais, the key of the country during the Crusades,) remained in the power of the old inhabitants. The tribe of Zebulun stretched across the land, with one extremity resting on the lake of Gennesareth, the other on the sea, in some part of the bay of Acco. Issachar, the other half of Manasseh, and Ephraim, lay in the same manner, one below the other, extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. On the borders of Zebulun and Issachar, rose the Mount Tabor, standing quite alone, on the edge of the great plain of Jezreel (Esdraelon), which is described, even in the present day, as spreading out a boundless expanse of the most luxuriant grain, waving like the sea. The portion of Manasseh became more hilly. Ephraim lay below, a fertile, but uneven, and in some parts mountainous territory. On its northern extremity rose Ebal and Gerizim, and to the south the Mount of Ephraim, a district in which were several passes of great importance in the military history of the Jews. Ephraim ranked as the most numerous and powerful of the northern tribes. Southward, the sea coast and the western part of the inland district fell to the lot of Dan. Benjamin took possession of the palm groves and fertile plain of Jericho, spread over part of the valley of the Jordan and the head of the Dead Sea, and extended westward as far as Jebus, then a fortress in the possession of the enemy, afterwards Jerusalem. The rest of the south, to the borders of Edom, excepting a district on the south-west about Gaza, assigned to Simeon,

made the large and opulent domain of the great tribe of Judah, to whom the first lot had fallen. On the whole, the best pastures were on the east of Jordan, the central plains were the most productive corn lands, the hills of Judah and Benjamin had the richest vineyards and olive grounds.

The assignment of the different estates, the average of which we will assume at about twenty acres, as a farther deduction should be made at this period on account of the unconquered parts of the territory, seems to have been left to the local government of each tribe. Certain distinguished persons, as Joshua and Caleb, received grants of land larger than ordinary ; perhaps the heads of the tribes enjoyed a similar privilege ; but the whole land was subject to the common law of property. The great principle of this law was the inalienability of estates. Houses in walled towns might be sold in perpetuity, if unredeemed within the year ; land only for a limited period. At the jubilee, every estate reverted, without repurchase, to the original proprietor. Even during this period, it might be redeemed, should the proprietor become rich enough, at the value which the estate would produce during the years unelapsed before the jubilee. This remarkable Agrarian law secured the political equality of the people, and anticipated all the mischiefs so fatal to the early republics of Greece and Italy, the appropriation of the whole territory of the state by a rich and powerful landed oligarchy, with the consequent convulsions of the community, from the deadly struggle between the patrician and plebeian orders. In the Hebrew state, the improvident individual might reduce himself

and his family to penury or servitude, but he could not perpetuate a race of slaves or paupers. Every fifty years, God, the King and Lord of the soil, as it were, resumed the whole territory, and granted it back in the same portions to the descendants of the original possessors. It is curious to observe in this earliest practical Utopia, the realization of Machiavelli's great maxim, the constant renovation of the state according to the first principles of its constitution. The outline of this plan may have been Egyptian. The king of that country, during the administration of Joseph, became proprietor of the whole land, and leased it out on a reserved rent of one-fifth, exactly the two-tenths or tithes paid by the Israelites. Thus the body of the people were an independent yeomanry, residing on their hereditary farms, the boundaries of which remained for ever of the same extent; for the removal of a neighbour's land mark was among the crimes against which the law uttered its severest malediction; an invasion of family property, that of Naboth's vineyard, is selected as the worst crime of a most tyrannical king; and in the decline of the state, the prophets denounce, with their sternest energy, this violation of the very basis of the commonwealth. In this luxuriant soil, each man had the only capital necessary to cultivate his property to the highest degree of productiveness, the industry of himself and his sons. Hence large properties would by no means have increased the general wealth, while they might have endangered the independence of the people. The greater danger to be apprehended in so populous a country, might seem to have been the minute subdivisions of the

estates, as all the sons inherited; the eldest had a double portion. Females succeeded only in default of males, and then under the restriction that they might not marry out of their own tribe. Yet this inconvenience seems never to have been practically felt, the land, though closely, was never over peopled. Periods of famine are by no means common.

The law against usury must not be omitted. It is well known how much the exactions from the poor, through the enormous rate of interest, added to the political inequalities, factions, and jealousies, which distracted Rome and Athens. The Hebrew lawgiver anticipated this evil likewise. He positively prohibited, not merely usury, but all interest whatever on money lent to a Hebrew. A loan was a charitable accommodation, due from a brother to a brother. Money might be lent with profit or advantage only to a foreigner. Even pledges, or goods taken in pawn, were under strict regulations. Nothing absolutely necessary to life was to be retained; on no account both the upper and lower stones of the hand-mill in common use. Raiment was to be restored before nightfall; the raiment of a widow was not to be taken at all in pledge. The house was sacred, and could not be entered to seize the goods in pawn.

Each estate was held on the tenure of military service; all Israel was one standing army. Some curious exemptions were made, which show the attention of the lawgiver to the agricultural habits and domestic comfort of his people—the being just married, or having newly taken a piece of land into cultivation.



The only taxes were the two-tenths and the other religious offerings. The first tenth was assigned to the tribe of Levi, as we have before observed, for the maintenance of this learned nobility, and in return for the surrender of their right to a twelfth portion of the land. The Levites had likewise forty-eight cities, each with a domain of between eight and nine hundred acres. Thirteen of these cities were in the northern provinces of Naphtali, Issachar, Asher, and the half Manasseh beyond Jordan. Twelve in Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. In Ephraim, half Manasseh, and Dan, ten. In Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, thirteen.

The second tenth was called the Tithe of Feasts, or the Tithe of the Poor. For the first and second year, in the place where the nation assembled for divine worship, *in the presence of the Lord*; every third year, in the chief town of the district, public tables were opened, at which all ranks and classes feasted together at the common expense of the richer proprietors. An institution, simple and beautiful, securing the advantages of brotherhood and kindly feeling, while it avoided that too great interference with the private and domestic habits which arose out of the public tables in some of the Grecian republics. The Hebrew was reminded sufficiently often that he was member of a larger national, and a smaller municipal community, but his usual sphere was that of private life. The Greek was always a public man, the member of the family was lost in the citizen.

The only public revenue of the Hebrew commonwealth was that of the sacred treasury, the only public expenditure that of the religious worship.

This was supported by a portion of the spoils taken in war; the first fruits, which in their institution were no more than could be carried in a basket, at a later period were rated to be one part in sixty; the redemption of the first-born, and of whatever was vowed to the Lord. Almost everything of the last class might be commuted for money according to a fixed scale. The different annual festivals were well calculated to promote internal commerce: maritime or foreign trade is scarcely mentioned in the law, excepting in two obscure prophetic intimations of advantages which the tribes of Dan and Zebulon were to derive from their maritime situation. On this subject the lawgiver could have learned nothing in Egypt. The commerce of that country was confined to the inland caravan trade. The Egyptians hated or dreaded the sea, which they considered either the dwelling of the evil principle, or the evil principle itself. At all events, the Hebrews at this period were either blind to the maritime advantages of their situation, or unable to profit by them. The ports were the last places they conquered. Sidon, if indeed within their boundary, never lost its independence; Tyre, if it existed, was a town too obscure to be named; Ecdippa and Acco remained in the power of the Canaanites; Joppa is not mentioned as a port till much later. The manufactures of the people supplied their own wants; they brought from Egypt the arts of weaving woollens and linens, stuffs made of fine goat's hair, and probably cotton; of dyeing in various colours, and bleaching, and of embroidering; of many kinds of carpenter's work; of building, some of the rules

of which were regulated by law; of making earthenware vessels; of working in iron, brass, and the precious metals, both casting them and forming them with the tool; of gilding, engraving seals, and various other kinds of ornamental work, which were employed in the construction of the altars and sacred vessels of the Tabernacle.

Thus the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were permanently established in the promised land, each man, according to the picturesque language of the country, dwelt under his own vine or his own fig-tree. No accident disturbed the peace and harmony of the state before the death of Joshua, excepting a dispute between the tribes within and those beyond the Jordan. The Transjordanic tribes raised a public altar to God; this was resented by the rest of the nation as a signal of defection from the national religion and national confederacy. But before they resorted to violent means, they tried an amicable remonstrance. The conference was conducted with temper and moderation; the tribes beyond the river disclaimed all intention of derogating from the dignity of the single national place of divine worship, and protested that they had raised the altar, not for the purpose of offering rival sacrifices, but only to commemorate to the latest posterity that their tribes formed a part of the great national confederacy. The explanation was considered satisfactory, and peace restored.

A short time after this event Joshua, whose military prowess and experience had directed the conquest of the country, died. He appointed no successor to the supreme authority, and the sepa-

rate republics, under the control of their own chieftains, and other local officers, assumed the administration of affairs. The Utopia of the law-giver commenced its political existence; the land of milk and honey began to yield its fruits to a simple, free, and pious race of husbandmen, a people worthy of its blessings: but one fatal act of disobedience, the desisting from the war before their enemies were rooted out, prevented its permanence; and the land which was intended to be a scene of peace and freedom, before long became that of war and servitude.

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## BOOK VI.

### THE JUDGES.

*Authority of the Judges—Destruction of the Tribe of Benjamin—Othniel—Deborah—Gideon—Jephthah—Samson—Eli—Samuel—Nomination of Saul as King.*



## THE PERIOD

FROM THE EXODUS TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

*According to Josephus and  
St. Paul, 591 yrs. 6 m.*

The desert .....	40
Conquest and partition .....	7
To first servitude .....	20
Mesopotamian servitude ...	8
Othniel to second servitude..	40
Moabite servitude .....	18
Ehud and Shamgar .....	80
Canaanitish servitude .....	20
Deborah and Barak .....	40
Midianitish servitude .....	7
Gideon .....	40
Abimelech .....	3
Tola .....	22
Jair .....	22
Ammonitish servitude .....	18
Jephtha .....	6
Ibzan .....	7
Elon .....	10
Abdon .....	8
Philistine servitude—Sam- son and Eli .....	60
Anarchy .....	20.6
Samuel .....	12
Samuel and Saul .....	40
David .....	40
Solomon .....	3

591.6

*According to the Vulgar Bible  
Chronology, 478 yrs. 6 m.*

The desert .....	40
Conquest and partition .....	6.4
Mesopotamian servitude and Othniel .....	40
Moab and Ehud.....	80
Canaanites and Deborah ...	40
Midian and Gideon .....	40
To Abimelech .....	9.2
Abimelech—Tola—Jair....	48
Jephtha .....	6
Ibzan—Elon—Abdon .....	25
Eli and Samson .....	40
Samuel .....	21
Saul .....	40
David .....	40
Solomon .....	3
<hr/>	
478.6	

According to the shorter scheme, the Exodus took place about 1490 B.C. ; according to the longer, about 1600 B.C.

THE period of the Judges is the heroic age of Hebrew history. It abounds in wild adventure, and desperate feats of individual valour. Personal

activity, daring, and craft, were the qualifications which raised the judges to their title and eminence. They appear in their history as gallant insurgents or guerilla leaders, rather than as grave administrators of justice, or the regular authorities of a great kingdom. The name by which they are called, *Sophetim*, derived from a word signifying "to judge," bears remarkable resemblance to the *Suffetes* of the Carthaginians. The office of the Hebrew judge was rather that of the military dictator, raised on an emergency to the command of the national forces. What his judicial functions could have been, seems very doubtful, as all ordinary cases would fall under the cognizance of the municipal judicatures. Nor do we find the judges exercising authority, or even engaged in war, beyond the boundaries of their own tribe; unless perhaps Deborah, who sat under her palm-tree judging the tribes of Israel. Yet even this convention bears the appearance rather of an organized warlike confederacy, to break the yoke of the Canaanites, than of a peaceful judicial assembly, and some of the tribes took no share in her gallant enterprise, nor, as far as appears, rendered any allegiance to her authority. In fact, the want of union among the tribes arose naturally out of their disobedience to the commands of their lawgiver, and brought with it the punishment of that disobedience, not merely in the abandonment of protecting Providence, but in the ordinary course of events. The neighbourhood of the idolatrous tribes led to apostasy, apostasy to weakness and servitude. For, as the national strength depended on the national union, and the only bond of the

national union was the national religion, that bond weakened or dissolved, the tribes remained a number of scattered cantons, each entirely dependent on its own internal resources to resist foreign invasion, or the insurrection of the Canaanites.

The imperfect conquest had left formidable enemies, not only on the frontier, but in the heart of the land. The necessity of taking up those arms which they had so rashly laid down, speedily became urgent. It was no longer, however, a national war, but a war of the separate tribes against their immediate enemies. The Danites were driven into the mountains by the revolt of the Amorites ; and part of the tribe was obliged to seek a settlement by force of arms on the extreme northern frontier. The town of Laish was hence called Dan. Judah and Simeon attacked Bezek, a powerful king, of Jebus or Jerusalem—defeated him with great loss—and treated him, as he had been accustomed to treat the other kings whom he had subdued, by the mutilation of his extremities. They burnt the lower part of Jerusalem ; then, turning their arms southward, expelled the gigantic inhabitants of Hebron : but Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, still defied their power ; and though they starved many of the mountain fortresses to surrender, they dared not encounter the iron chariots of the inhabitants of the southern valleys. Ephraim took the town of Bethel ; but the other tribes seem to have adopted the dangerous measure of entering into terms with their enemies, and permitting them to reside in the land on the payment of tribute. Intermarriages soon followed, and led to community of religious worship. The Israelites strayed, without scruple,



into the shady groves, where the voluptuous rites of the Canaanites were held ; or attended at their gay and splendid festivals. By degrees they began to incorporate the two religions, and to pay indiscriminate homage to the symbolic representations of the powers of nature, particularly of the sun and moon, as well as to their own peculiar God, the Creator of the Universe.

The decline of the national faith, and the dissolution of manners, were fearfully exemplified in certain other transactions which occurred before the time of the Judges. Part of the Danites, on their way to their conquest of the northern border, took violent possession of a silver idol, the property of an individual named Micah, and set it up, with a wandering Levite for its priest, as an object of religious worship. The crime of Benjamin was of a more cruel nature, and as directly opposite to the principles of the moral law, as to the spirit of the national union. It led to a bloody civil war, and almost to the total annihilation of the guilty tribe. It is a history of bloody crime, wild justice, and still wilder mercy. A Levite returning to his home with his concubine, or inferior wife, entered, to pass the night, the city of Gibeah, in the territory of Benjamin. The dissolute inhabitants abused the wretched woman till she died. The Levite cut the body into pieces, and sent a portion to each of the tribes. The whole of Israel assembled as one man, at Mizpeh, heard with indignation the appeal to their justice, and sent to demand the surrender of the delinquents. The proud and powerful tribe refusing satisfaction, the rest declared war, and invaded their territory. Twice they were defeated

with great slaughter : on the third attack, employing a common stratagem, they enticed their enemies, by a pretended flight, to leave the strong walls of Gibeah, and follow them into the plain. An ambush rose up behind, and surprised the city. Benjamin was defeated with the loss of 25,000 men—the guilty city razed—the whole land laid desolate—men, women, and children put to the sword : 600 men alone remained strongly posted on the rock of Rimmon. But even in the pride of triumph, and the stern satisfaction of just revenge, Israel could not behold the extermination of one of their tribes without the deepest sorrow and repentance. Yet they had sworn at Mizpeh never to give their daughters in marriage to the unnatural and rebellious race. How then shall the families of Benjamin be renewed, and the twelve tribes of Jacob again meet in their solemn assemblies ? Strange situations lead to strange expedients. One city, Jabesh in Gilead, had been guilty of that most heinous crime, the desertion of the common cause at a time of danger and distress. The city was devoted ; all the men were slain ; the women given to the survivors of Benjamin. The number not being sufficient, the rest of the Benjamites were permitted to surprise the damsels dancing at a festival without the gates of Shiloh ; and by these Sabine marriages the tribe of Benjamin gradually recovered its strength and consideration.

The generation which had entered the land with Joshua, is said to have passed away before the declension of the people from the national faith led to servitude ; but not entirely ; for the first deliverer of the people was Othniel, the nephew and son-in-

law of Caleb, whose name occurs as a brave warrior during the conquest. A powerful monarchy had now grown up in Mesopotamia; the king, Chushan-rishathaim, extended his conquests at least as far as the Jordan. The federal league between the tribes was not yet so far relaxed but that Othniel, of Judah, took up their defence. At the end of eight years the Mesopotamian was entirely defeated, and the whole land remained in peace for forty more. The eastern tribes were then assailed by a confederacy of the Ammonites, Amalekites, and Moabites, under Eglon, king of the latter tribe. Jericho, the city of palms, or its site, was also taken, perhaps from the tribe of Benjamin not having yet recovered its strength. This oppression lasted eighteen years. The deliverance was effected by a desperate enterprise of Ehud, a Benjamite.\* Ehud was a man ambi-dexter, who could use his left hand as well as his right. He obtained an audience of Eglon, a remarkably fat man, struck his dagger into his body, escaped, and flying to the mountainous part of the land of Ephraim, roused that powerful tribe, and totally defeated the Moabites. Eighty years of peace were the fruit of this hazardous adventure. The only exploit recorded of the next judge, Shamgar, is the slaughter of 600 Philistines with an ox-goad, a formidable weapon, if like that described by Maundrell—a strong pike, eight feet long, and pointed with iron.

\* It may be observed, that, although all these men were, in Hebrew phraseology, said to be raised up by the Lord, that is, inspired with the noble design, and endowed with ability to deliver their country, yet all their particular actions are nowhere attributed to divine direction.

By this time the Canaanites in the north had grown into a powerful people. Hazor, the capital of Jabin, their king, was on the shore of the Samachonite Lake, and his general, Sisera, was a man terrible for his valour and conduct. For twenty years he oppressed the northern tribes. Deborah, a high-born woman of the tribe of Ephraim, richly endowed at least with the poetic part of the character of a prophetess, was inspired with the noble design of freeing her brethren from the yoke. She sat in the open air, under a palm-tree, reminding us of the Velleda of ancient Germany, and organized a strong confederacy. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, as well as the northern tribes, obeyed her call. She commanded Barak to draw up the forces of Issachar, Zebulon, and Napthali, on the summit of Mount Tabor. The vast army of the Canaanites, 900 chariots strong, covered the level plain of Esdraelon at its foot. Barak burst suddenly from the mountain—the Canaanites were broken and fled. The river Kishon, which bounded the plain, was swollen, and multitudes perished in the waters. But, for the criminal inactivity of the inhabitants of Meroz, an adjacent town, who did not join in the pursuit, few would have escaped. Sisera fled, and took refuge in the tent of Jael, a woman of the Kenite tribe (the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law). She received him hospitably; entertained him with the pastoral refreshment of milk, and left him to repose. In his sleep she drove one of the iron pegs of the tent into his head, and killed him. Deborah's hymn of triumph was worthy of the victory. The solemn religious commencement—the picturesque

description of the state of the country—the mustering of the troops from all quarters—the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof—the life, fire, and energy of the battle—the bitter pathos of the close—lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production. But this hymn has great historic as well as poetic value. It is the only description of the relation of the tribes to each other, and of the state of society during the period of the Judges. The northern tribes—Zebulon, Issachar, Naphtali—appear in a state of insurrection against their oppressors: they receive some assistance from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The pastoral tribes beyond Jordan remain in unpatriotic inactivity. Dan and Asher are engaged in their maritime concerns; a curious fact, for we have no other intimation of any mercantile transactions of the Hebrews—as these expressions seem to imply—earlier than the reign of Solomon. Of Judah and Simeon there is no notice whatever, as if they had seceded from the confederacy, or were occupied by enemies of their own.

Thus sang Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam,  
In the day of victory thus they sang;  
That Israel hath wrought her mighty vengeance,  
That the willing people rushed to battle,  
Oh, therefore, praise Jehovah!

Hear, ye kings! give ear, ye princes!  
I to Jehovah, I will lift the song,  
I will sound the harp to Jehovah, God of Israel!

Jehovah! when thou wentest forth from Seir!  
When thou marchedst through the fields of Edom!



Quaked the earth, and poured the heavens,  
Yea, the clouds poured down with water :  
Before Jehovah's face the mountains melted,  
That Sinai before Jehovah's face,  
The God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,  
In Jael's days, untrodden were the highways,  
Through the winding by-path stole the traveller ;  
Upon the plains deserted lay the hamlets,  
Even till that I, till Deborah arose,  
Till I arose in Israel a mother.

They chose new gods :  
War was in all their gates !  
Was buckler seen, or lance,  
'Mong forty thousand sons of Israel ?

My soul is yours, ye chiefs of Israel !  
And ye, the self-devoted of the people,  
Praise ye the Lord with me !  
Ye that ride upon the snow-white asses ;  
Ye that sit to judge on rich divans ;  
Ye that plod on foot the open way,  
Come, meditate the song.

For the noise of plundering archers by the wells of water,  
Now they meet and sing aloud Jehovah's righteous acts :  
His righteous acts the hamlets sing upon the open plains,  
And enter their deserted gates the people of Jehovah.

Awake, Deborah, awake !  
Awake, uplift the song !  
Barak, awake ; and lead thy captives captive,  
Thou son of Abinoam !

With him a valiant few went down against the mighty,  
With me Jehovah's people went down against the strong.

First Ephraim, from the Mount of Amalek,  
And after thee the bands of Benjamin !  
From Machir came the rulers of the people,  
From Zebulon those that bear the marshal's staff;  
And Issachar's brave princes came with Deborah,  
Issachar, the strength of Barak:  
They burst into the valley on his footsteps.

By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating—  
Why sat'st thou idle, Reuben, 'mid thy herd-stalls ?  
Was it to hear the lowing of thy cattle?  
By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating—

And Gilead lingered on the shores of Jordan—  
And Dan, why dwelled he among his ships?—  
And Asser dwelled in his sea-shore havens,  
And sat upon his rocks precipitous.  
But Zebulon was a death-defying people,  
And Napthali from off the mountain heights.

Came the king and fought,  
Fought the kings of Canaan,  
By Taanach, by Megiddo's waters,  
For the golden booty that they won not.

From the heavens they fought 'gainst Sisera,  
In their courses fought the stars against him:  
The torrent Kishon swept them down,  
That ancient river Kishon.  
So trample thou, my soul, upon their might.

Then stamped the clattering hoofs of prancing horses  
At the flight, at the flight of the mighty.

Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord,  
Curse, a twofold curse upon her dastard sons;  
For they came not to the succour of Jehovah,  
To the succour of Jehovah 'gainst the mighty.

Above all women blest be Jael,  
Heber the Kenite's wife,  
O'er all the women blest, that dwell in tents.

Water he asked—she gave him milk  
The curded milk, in her costliest bowl.

Her left hand to the nail she set,  
Her right hand to the workman's hammer—  
Then Sisera she smote—she clave his head ;  
She bruised—she pierced his temples.  
At her feet he bowed ; he fell ; he lay ;  
At her feet he bowed ; he fell ;  
Where he bowed, there he fell dead.

From the window she looked forth, she cried,  
The mother of Sisera through the lattice :  
“ Why is his chariot so long in coming !  
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot ? ”  
Her prudent women answered her—  
Yea she herself gave answer to herself—  
“ Have they not seized, not shared the spoil ?  
One damsel, or two damsels to each chief ?  
To Sisera a many-coloured robe,  
A many-coloured robe, and richly broidered,  
Many-coloured and broidered round the neck.”

Thus perish all thine enemies, Jehovah ;  
And those who love thee, like the sun, shine forth,  
The sun in all its glory\*.

At the end of forty years of peace new enemies  
appeared—the wild hordes of the desert. Midi-

\* In the above translation an attempt is made to preserve something like a rythmical flow. It adheres to the original language, excepting where an occasional word is, but rarely, inserted for the sake of perspicuity.

anites, Amalekites, and other nomadic tribes, swept over almost the whole land, pitched their tents, and fed their camels in the midst of the rich corn-fields of Israel. This was the most extensive and destructive servitude the nation had yet suffered. The people fled to mountain fastnesses, and hid themselves in caves. The land lay uncultivated, the cattle were destroyed, and a grievous famine ensued. The miserable Israelites called upon their God for succour, and Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, received the divine commission as the deliverer of his country. An angel appeared to him while he was threshing corn by stealth in an underground winepress; preternatural signs convinced him of the celestial nature of his visitant. Gideon had offered, as a present to this superior being, a kid and a small portion of flour: he laid them on a rock. The angel touched them, and fire arose from the rock and consumed them. His first exploit, after having built an altar, and, according to divine command, offered sacrifice, was to overthrow at midnight the altar of Baal in the city of Ophrah. His father Joash was commanded by the indignant citizens to bring forth his son to be punished for this offence. *Will ye plead for Baal!* said the old man: *let Baal plead for himself.* And Gideon thence was called Jerubbaal—let Baal plead. The whole host of the invaders lay encamped on the plain of Jezreel. Gideon demanded a sign from heaven; it was granted. One night, the dews which fall so copiously in those regions, fell only on a fleece which he had spread; the next night the ground was steeped with moisture—the fleece remained dry.

Gideon now prepared for a vigorous attack ; 22,000 men, from Manasseh, Zebulun, Napthali, and Asher, rallied at the sound of his trumpet—but the victory was to be achieved by a much smaller band. The army was first diminished to 10,000—all, whose valour could not be relied on, being allowed to return home. These were again reduced, by a singular process, of which it is difficult to discover the meaning. They were led to the water-side : those who knelt down to drink were dismissed ; those who stood up, and lifted the water to their lips with their hands, were retained. Thus 300 of the bravest were chosen for a night attack. Each of these had a trumpet, a concealed lamp, and an earthen pot. At the onset, each crashed his pot in pieces, and blew his trumpet with all his might. The wild and mingled tribes awoke, and in their panic and confusion, turned their arms upon each other. The herds, and particularly the camels, affrighted at the lights, ran wildly about, and added to the tumult. The fugitives were slain by the rest of Gideon's troops. The Ephraimites now joined the insurrection, pursued the remnant of the Midianites beyond Palestine, and slew two of their princes, Oreb and Zeb. Their indignation against Gideon, at not being earlier summoned to the war, was soothed by the courtesy of the leader. Gideon took a dreadful revenge on the inhabitants of Succoth for having refused refreshment to his famishing warriors—he scourged their elders to death with thorns. He inflicted as dreadful a chastisement on the surviving princes of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, who had slain his kindred : he put them to death with-



out mercy ; and thus the war ended with the loss of 120,000 men to the Midianites. The gratitude of his compatriots induced them to make an offer of royal authority to Gideon, but his ambition was satisfied with the deliverance of his country ; he returned to dwell in quiet in his native city. Yet even Gideon fell into a direct violation of the law. From the spoil of the Midianites, who, like all the inhabitants of those regions, wore enormous golden earrings, and from the splendid raiment of the kings, he made an ephod or priestly garment ; and set up a worship distinct from the one sacred place in Shiloh, where the ark rested.

After the death of Gideon, his bastard son Abimelech, a daring and bloody man, determined to attain the crown which his father had rejected. He formed a conspiracy with his mother's kindred at Shechem ; with a band of adventurers fell unexpectedly on Ophrah ; seized his father's seventy sons, slew them all ; and, in a great convention of the Shechemites and the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, was elected king by acclamation. Of all Gideon's sons, Jotham alone, the youngest, had escaped. On the summit of Gerizim, which overlooked Shechem, he denounced the usurper, and reproved the people in the well-known parable : " The olive tree and the vine refused to assume the royal dignity, but the worthless bramble accepted at once the first offer of a tyrannous superiority over the trees of the forest." The authority of Abimelech seems to have been confined to Shechem and its neighbourhood : the other tribes neither contributed to his rise nor downfall. But the

fickle Shechemites, after three years, began to be weary of their king, and attempted to throw off the yoke. The usurper was not wanting in vigour and promptitude; he took the city, razed it to the ground, and burnt the citadel, on which they seem to have relied as a place of strength. Pursuing his conquest, he was accidentally wounded by a woman, during an attack on Thebez, but disdaining to die by so ignoble a hand, he commanded his armour-bearer to pierce him with his sword.

Two undistinguished names follow in the list of Judges: Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, who, nevertheless, dwelt at Shamir, in the mountainous country of the Ephraimites; and Jair, a Gileadite, whose thirty sons were masters of thirty cities, *and rode on thirty ass colts*. A new apostacy led to a new invasion. The Philistines attacked the southern border; and a more formidable enemy, the Ammonites, not merely subdued the tribes beyond Jordan, but crossed the river, and engaged the combined forces of Ephraim, Judah, and Benjamin.

Jephthah, a bastard son of Gilead, having been wrongfully expelled from his father's house, had taken refuge in a wild country, and become a noted captain of freebooters. His kindred, groaning under foreign oppression, began to look to their valiant, though lawless, compatriot, whose profession, however, according to their usage, was no more dishonourable than that of a pirate, in the elder days of Greece. They sent for him, and made him head of their city. Jephthah's first measure was to send an embassy to the Ammonitish king,

remonstrating on his unprovoked aggression. The Ammonite demanded the formal surrender of the transjordanic provinces, as the patrimony of his own ancestors, and of those of his allies. Negotiations being fruitless, Jephthah prepared for war. But before he set forth, he made the memorable vow, that if he returned victorious, he would sacrifice as a burnt offering whatever first met him on his entrance into his native city, Mizpeh. He gained a splendid victory—but it was neither one of those animals appointed for sacrifice, nor even an unclean beast, an ass, or camel, prohibited by the law—which was destined for the burnt offering of Jephthah. At the news of her father's victory, his only daughter came dancing forth in the gladness of her heart, and with the most jocund instruments of music, to salute the deliverer of his people. The miserable father rent his clothes in agony, but the noble-spirited maiden would not hear of the evasion, or disregard of the vow; she only demanded a short period to bewail upon the mountains, like the Antigone of Sophocles, her dying without hope of becoming a bride or mother in Israel, and then submitted to her fate. Many learned writers have laboured to relieve the Jewish annals, and the character of the judge from the imputation of human sacrifice, and have supposed that Jephthah's daughter was consecrated to the service of the tabernacle, and devoted to perpetual virginity. But all these expedients are far more improbable, than that a fierce freebooter in a period of anarchy should mistake an act of cruel superstition for an act of religion; and it is certain that vows of celibacy were totally unknown

among the Hebrews, and belong to a different stage of society. Another objection of Michaelis is fatal to these views. The daughter could not be consecrated to the service of the high priest, for the high priest and the ark were then at Shiloh, in the territory of Ephraim, with whom Jephthah was at deadly war. The haughty and overbearing character of this tribe resented, as usual, their not being summoned to take the lead in the Ammonitish war. They threatened to wreak their vengeance on Jephthah and his adherents; but the Gileadite chieftain defeated them, and at the passage of the Jordan, distinguishing the Ephraimites by a peculiar pronunciation, (Shibboleth,—water-streams—they sounded as Sibboleth,) put them to the sword without mercy to the number of 42,000. Jephthah enjoyed his dignity for seven years; then follow a list of undistinguished names—of their actions, or against whom they waged war, the record is silent. Ibzan of Bethlehem judged seven; Elon of Zebulun ten, Abdon, an Ephraimite, eight years.

The oppressions of the foreign powers which had hitherto overrun or subdued Palestine, had been heavy and debasing while they lasted, but once repelled, the invaders retired within their own frontiers; the Philistines on the southern borders were more dangerous and implacable enemies to the peace of Israel. They had subdued apparently the whole allotment of Simeon; this tribe was annihilated, or scattered for refuge among the rest. Gaza and Ashkelon were in the power of the conquerors, and their frontier extended to that of Dan. At this juncture, the most extraor-

dinary of the Jewish heroes appeared; a man of prodigious physical power, which he displayed not in any vigorous and consistent plan of defence against the enemy, but in the wildest feats of personal daring. It was his amusement to plunge headlong into peril, from which he extricated himself by his individual strength. Samson never appears at the head of an army, his campaigns are conducted in his own single person. As in those of the Grecian Hercules, and the Arabian Antar, a kind of comic vein runs through the early adventures of the stout-hearted warrior, in which, love of women, of riddles, and of slaying Philistines out of mere wantonness, vie for the mastery. Yet his life began in marvel, and ended in the deepest tragedy. An angel announced to the wife of Manoah, a man of eminence, in the tribe of Dan, that her barrenness should be removed, and that she should become the mother of a wonderful child. The child was to be a Nazarite from the womb, that is, dedicated by vow to the Lord; he was, therefore, to allow his hair to grow, and to preserve the most rigid abstinence. A second time, the Angel appeared to Manoah and his wife, renewed the command and the promise, and mounting with the smoke of the sacrifice they had offered, ascended into Heaven. When Samson grew up, his first demand was, that he might marry a Philistine woman, whom he had seen, and fallen in love with, at Timnath. With reluctance his parents consented, for they suspected some latent design against the oppressor. As he went down to Timnath, a young lion roared at him—Samson tore him asunder with his hands. The next time he



passed that way, bees had hived in the lion's carcase, and at his bridal feast he gave this riddle to the thirty youths who attended him ; if they found it out, he was to forfeit to each a sheet and a garment ; if they did not, they were to pay the same to him. *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.* At the entreaty of his wife, he betrayed the secret to her, and she to her countrymen. *Had ye not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle,* replied the indignant bridegroom, and immediately set out and slew thirty Philistines, in order to make good his promise. He then returned home in anger, but in a short time, visiting his wife again, he found her married to another. To revenge himself, he caught three hundred jackalls, tied them tail to tail, with a fire-brand between them, and turned them loose into the dry corn-fields of the Philistines. In return, they burnt his wife and her father to death. Samson immediately fell on them, and slew great numbers :— he then took refuge on a rock called Etam. The Philistines were assembled in a narrow pass, from some fanciful resemblance to the jaw-bone of an ass, or, more probably, from the adventure of Samson, called Lehi. So completely were the valiant tribe of Judah disheartened by the Philistine oppression, that, to appease their wrath, they determined to surrender Samson. They seized and bound him, and brought him to the pass. There *the spirit of the Lord came upon him*, he burst the bonds like flax, seized the jaw-bone of an ass that lay in the way, and with this strange

weapon slew a thousand men. But, exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he began to faint, the ground was suddenly cloven, and a spring of water flowed before his feet. His next exploit was to visit a harlot in Gaza, the capital city of his enemies. They closed their gates, and waited quietly, to seize their formidable foe. At midnight, Samson arose, burst the gates, took them on his shoulders, and left them on a hill, near twenty miles distant. He then fell into the more fatal snares of Dalilah. The Philistine chieftains bribed her to obtain the secret of his prodigious strength. Twice he eluded her—the third time he betrayed himself into her power. It lay in the accomplishment of his Nazaritish vow, part of which was, never to permit his hair to be shorn. In his sleep, she deprived him of his hair and of his strength. The Philistines seized him, put out his eyes, bound him with brazen fetters, and set him to the servile task of grinding at the mill. The grave and solemn mind of Milton has seized upon the history of Samson, at this point, and arrayed the close of his life in all the grandeur of heroic patience and resignation. The insults of the Philistines did not end with the prison; savages delight in making a public exhibition of distinguished captives, and this barbarous people sent for their prisoner to contribute to their diversion in a kind of rude amphitheatre, in the area of which stood the captive;—the roof, which formed the seats, was crowded with spectators. But the strength of Samson had now returned; the whole building was supported by two pillars, which he grasped, and leaning him

self forward, dragged down the whole building, burying himself and all his enemies in one common ruin.

While Samson was thus wasting his prodigal strength, not altogether uselessly, for, without doubt, the terror of his name retarded the progress of the Philistine conquests, and inspired courage into the disheartened Israelites; still without that permanent advantage to the liberty of his countrymen which might have been expected from such preternatural powers, regulated by prudence and self-restraint; a wiser and more useful head of the state was growing up within the sacred precincts of the tabernacle. Hannah, one of the wives of Elkanah, a Levite who resided in Rama-Zophim, a city in Mount Ephraim, made a vow, that if the curse of barrenness were removed from her, she would devote her first born to the service of God. Samuel, her son, was thus educated in the service of the high priest Eli. It was to be expected that the high priest would obtain great weight and authority in the Hebrew constitution. Wherever the ark resided, might be considered the temporary capital of the state. The present circumstances of the Hebrew history contributed to exalt still higher the sacerdotal power. The tabernacle and the ark were at Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim, from its fortunate central position the most powerful, as the least exposed to foreign invasion, of all the provinces. The northern and eastern tribes had enough to do to defend their frontiers; Judah, the great rival of Ephraim, now tamely acknowledged the dominion of the Philistines. Hence the uncontested pre-eminence of the Ephraimites led to

a temporary union of a civil as well as religious supremacy in the high priest Eli. But Eli was now old and almost blind; his criminal indulgence to his sons Hophni and Phineas had brought disorder and licentiousness into the sacred ceremonies. The priests had become overbearing and tyrannical; instead of taking the portions of the sacrifices assigned by the law, they selected all the better parts for their own use; and Hophni and Phineas had introduced still worse abuses,—those which disgraced the voluptuous rites of the heathen deities. They debauched the women who assembled before the tabernacle, and the worship of Jehovah was thus in danger of becoming as impure as that of Baal Peor, or the Babylonian Mylitta. In the midst of this corruption the blameless Samuel grew up to manhood. Already in his early youth he had received divine intimations of his future greatness; the voice of God, while he slumbered within the area where the tabernacle stood, had three times called upon his name; and at length aroused him, and commanded him to communicate to the aged Eli the fate which awaited his family. The war between the Philistines and Israelites broke out anew; whether the Israelites, encouraged by the destruction of so many of the Philistine chieftains in the fall of the temple at Gaza, had endeavoured to throw off the yoke, or whether the Philistines seized the opportunity of Samson's death to extend their dominion, does not appear. A bloody battle took place at Aphek, in the northern part of Judah, in which the Israelites were totally defeated, and in their desperation they determined to resort to those means of con-

quest which had proved irresistible under the direction of Joshua. They sent to Shiloh for the ark of God, and placed it in the centre of their forces. But the days were gone when the rivers dried up, and the walls of cities fell down, and the enemy fled at once before the symbol of the presence of Israel's God. The measure was unauthorized by the Divine command. Yet even the victorious Philistines were not free from hereditary apprehension of the mighty God who had discomfited the Egyptians, and subjugated the whole land of the Canaanites. They exhorted each other to maintain their character for valour. The Israelites fought with desperate but unavailing resolution—the iron chariots of the Philistines triumphed. Thirty thousands Israelites perished, and the ark of God fell into the hands of the uncircumcised—the guilty sons of Eli were slain in its defence. The aged high priest sat by the wayside in dreadful anxiety for the fate of the ark. A messenger rushed in, bearing the sad intelligence; a wild cry ran through the whole city, the blind old man, now ninety-eight years of age, fell from his seat, broke his neck, and died. The wife of Phineas was seized with the pains of premature labour; the women around her endeavoured to console her with the intelligence that she had borne a male child: she paid no attention to their words, and only uttered a passionate exclamation, by which we may judge how strongly the religious reverence for the divine worship was rooted in the hearts of the Israelites. The pride and exultation of maternal tenderness, the grief for her father-in-law and her husband were absorbed in a deeper feeling.



She said, *the ark of God is taken*; and she called her child Ichabod, the glory is departed from Israel.

Nothing now remained to the race of Abraham but the prospect of hopeless and irremediable servitude. Their God had abandoned them—perhaps might appear on the side of their enemies. Not merely the glory, and the independence, even the political existence of Israel seemed departed with the ark, departed for ever. With what amazement and joy must the extraordinary intelligence have been received, that, after seven months, the Philistines were sending back the ark of God, not in contempt of his power, but with signs of reverential terror. They had sent the strange deity from city to city, everywhere their own gods had been rebuked, the statues had fallen prostrate, their harvests had been wasted by mice, their persons afflicted by a loathsome disease. They yoked two milch kine to the car, and loaded it with propitiatory offerings. Instead of lingering near their calves, the kine had set off on the direct road to Bethshemesh, within the border of the Israelites. There the Levites received it, and sacrificed the kine to the Almighty. The profane curiosity of the inhabitants of Bethshemesh was punished, seventy men were struck dead for presuming to look within the ark, which was soon after solemnly removed to the city of Kiriath-jearim.

Yet twenty years longer the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the Philistines; but Samuel was now grown to manhood, and was established not merely with the authority of a judge, but likewise of a prophet. The high priesthood had

passed into the next branch of the family of Eli, and sunk into comparative insignificance before the acknowledged weight of the new leader. Samuel, having laboured with success to extirpate the idolatrous practices which had grown up among the people, summoned a general assembly at Mizpeh. The Philistines took alarm, and put their forces in motion to suppress the insurrection. The Israelites were full of terror, but too far engaged to recede; their confidence in the favour of God towards their righteous judge, induced them to risk their safety on the acceptance of his prayers. The event was a victory so complete, caused partly by a tremendous storm, that the Philistines were forced to evacuate the whole country, and to accept of equitable terms of peace.

The civil administration of Samuel was equally prosperous. He united at least all the southern tribes under his authority: he held three annual sessions of justice at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh; his residence he fixed in his native city of Ramah. But his sons, who in his old age were installed in the judicial office, did not follow the example of their upright father; they were venal and corrupt. The people, therefore, having seen the superior efficacy of the monarchical government, which prevailed in the neighbouring countries, by a formal representation of their elders, demanded that their republican polity should be changed into an hereditary kingdom. It is most remarkable that Moses had anticipated this resolution; and, providing against the contingency of kingly government, had laid down regulations for the election of a sovereign and the administration of

regal power. The king was not to be a foreigner, lest the independence of the country should be lost, and the Israelitish commonwealth sink into a province of some great empire. He was prohibited from maintaining any force of cavalry, lest he should attempt foreign conquest, to the neglect or danger of the internal strength and security of the kingdom. The lawgiver either perceived that a free republic, or rather a federal government of twelve distinct republics, was an experiment in the constitution of society, or that the external relations of the commonwealth might so far change as to require a more vigorous executive. The avowed objects of the people in demanding a king were the more certain administration of justice, and the organization of a strong and permanent military force; *that our king might judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles*. The national militia, untrained and undisciplined, might be sufficient to repel the tumultuary invasions of the wandering tribes; but they had now to resist powerful monarchies, and the formidable league of the Philistine chieftains, who could bring into the field an overwhelming power of chariots and cavalry. The prosperity of the state under David and Solomon amply justifies the deviation from the original constitution. The conduct of Samuel on this occasion was prudent and moderate; he fairly laid before the people the dangers of an oriental despotism, the only monarchy then known, with all the exactions and oppressions of arbitrary power; and left them to make their choice. The popular feeling was decided in favour of the change. The next object therefore was the election of the king.

The nomination took place by divine instruction, but may be admired on the plainest principles of human policy. The upright and disinterested Samuel showed no favour to his own family, kindred or tribe. It was expedient that the king should be chosen from the southern tribes, as more immediately exposed to the most dangerous and implacable enemy. A prince of Asher or Napthali might have neglected the interests of Judah and Benjamin. An election from the great rival tribes of Ephraim or Judah might excite mutual jealousy, or dread of a domineering influence among the weaker clans. A youth of singularly tall and striking person, an eminent distinction in the East, arrived at Ramah. He was the son of a Benjamitish chieftain, and had been wandering in search of some asses, a valuable property, which his father had lost. Him Samuel is directed to nominate and receive with regal honours. Giving him the chief seat, and distinguished portion, at a feast where thirty persons were present, he proceeds privately to anoint him as the future king. But the youth was to be prepared for his high office by a course of religious instruction ; and his mind imbued with deep and powerful enthusiasm for the national law and national faith. He was sent to one of those schools of the prophets, most likely instituted by Samuel, where the pupils were initiated in the circle of Hebrew education—religious knowledge, religious music, and religious poetry. Here the character of the youth was totally changed : he mingled in the sacred dances : his spirit became full of lofty and aspiring thoughts. So totally was the former

levity and carelessness of his youth cast off, that his wandering compatriots exclaimed, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* Thus qualified for the royal dignity, at a solemn assembly at Mizpeh, Saul is designated by lot, and received as king, not indeed without murmur or opposition from some few factious spirits, but by the unanimous consent of the great majority. His first measure was bold, and answerable to the public expectation, as showing that the strength and vigilance of the royal power would extend its protection to the remotest part of the commonwealth. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had invaded the Transjordanic tribes, and now besieged the town of Jabez, in Gilead. He demanded that the inhabitants should submit to have their eyes put out; a revolting act of cruelty, which he had exacted, as a sign of subjection, from all the people he had subdued. The inhabitants sent in all haste to the king for succour. Saul instantly hewed a yoke of oxen to pieces, and sent this sign, like the fiery cross of the Highlanders, to summon all the tribes of Israel. The army mustered to the number of 330,000 men. The Ammonites were totally defeated and dispersed. The young king signalized his victory by an act of mercy; though persuaded to use his power to revenge himself on the factious persons who had opposed his elevation, he refused, and declared, that the life of no Israelite should be sacrificed at such a period of public rejoicing.

Encouraged by this prosperous commencement, Samuel assembled the people at Gilgal. Here the upright magistrate solemnly appealed to the whole assembly to bear witness to the justice and integrity



of his administration ; invited their scrutiny, and defied their censure : and thus, having given a public account of his charge, rebuked the people, both by his own words, and a sign from heaven, a thunder-storm at the unusual time of the wheat-harvest, for their innovation on the established constitution without direct pre-instruction from heaven, he surrendered his judicial authority, and proceeded to the formal inauguration of the king elect.

Thus ended the period of the Judges ; a period, if carelessly surveyed, of alternate slavery, and bloody struggles for independence. Hence may rashly be inferred the total failure of the Mosaic polity in securing the happiness of the people. It has already been shown that the views of the legislator were not completely carried into effect, and that the miseries of the people were the natural consequences of their deviation from their original statutes. But, in fact, out of this period of about 460 years, not one fourth was passed under foreign oppression ; and many of the servitudes seem to have been local, extending only over certain tribes, not over the whole nation. Above 300 years of peaceful and uneventful happiness remain, to which history, only faithful in recording the crimes and sufferings of man, bears the favourable testimony of her silence. If the Hebrew nation did not enjoy a high degree of intellectual civilization, yet, as simple husbandmen, possessing perfect freedom, equal laws, the regular administration of justice—cultivating a soil which yielded bountifully, yet required but light labour—with a religion, strict as regards the morals which are essential to indi-

vidual, domestic, and national peace, yet indulgent in every kind of social and festive enjoyment—the descendants of Abraham had reached a higher state of virtue and happiness than any other nation of the period. An uniform simplicity of manners pervaded the whole people; they were all shepherds or husbandmen. Gideon was summoned to deliver his country from the threshing-floor: Saul, even after he was elected king, was found driving his herd: David was educated in the shéepfold. But the habits of the people are nowhere described with such apparent fidelity and lively interest as in the rural tale of Ruth and her kinsman—a history which unites all the sweetness of the best pastoral poetry, with the truth and simplicity of real life. Now, however, we must turn to the rise, the greatness, and the fall of the Hebrew monarchy.

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## BOOK VII.

### THE MONARCHY.

*Reign of Saul—David—Death of Saul—Union of the whole Kingdom under David—His Conquests—Occupation of Jerusalem—His Crime—Expulsion—Restoration—Death—Solomon—The Building of the Temple—Magnificence and Commerce of Solomon.*



SOME time must have elapsed between the nomination of Saul, and his active and regular administration of the kingly office: he was a youth when nominated, his son, Jonathan, now appears grown up, a gallant and daring warrior. The monarch's first care was to form a regular and disciplined army; for the Philistines were mustering the most numerous and overpowering host they had ever brought into the field. Jonathan began the war, by attacking a garrison at Geba, before the preparations were completed. The Philistines broke into the country, and, with 3000 chariots and 6000 horse, swept the whole region. The panic-stricken Israelites fled on all sides: the few troops which obeyed the trumpet of Saul met at Gilgal. Here Saul, in direct violation of the Hebrew constitution, and against the express command of Samuel, took upon himself the priestly function, and offered sacrifice. The union of these two offices in one person would either have given an overweening weight to the kingly authority, or the religious primacy, instead of maintaining its independent dignity, would have sunk into a subordinate branch of the royal office. Samuel, who, if he offered sacrifice, probably assumed that right as belonging to the prophetic function, denounced, as the penalty of Saul's offence, that the kingdom should not be hereditary in his line, but pass into that of a man more obedient to the divine institutions. In the meantime the Philistines overran the ter-



ritory; part turned southward to the valley near the Dead Sea, part to the mountainous country of Ephraim, part towards the Jordan as far as Ophrah. They seized all the arms, and carried away all the smiths in the country, forcing the inhabitants to go to their towns to get all their larger implements of husbandry ground. Saul occupied the strong fortress of Gibeah, with 600 ill-armed men. From this critical situation he was delivered by an adventurous exploit of Jonathan. This daring youth, unknown to his father, and accompanied only by his armour-bearer, scaled a rock, which was an outpost of the enemy, slew twenty men, and threw such confusion into the camp, that the army, most likely formed of different tribes, fell upon each other. Saul, perceiving this from the height of Gibeah, rushed down, and increased the tumult. The Philistines fled on all sides: the Israelites sallied forth from their hiding-places in the woods and rocks, and slew them without mercy. The blow would have been more fatal, but for an impolitic vow of Saul, who had adjured the people not to taste food till the close of the day. Many evils ensued from this rash oath. The weary soldiers could not pursue their advantage: when they came to eat, they seized the spoil, and, in direct violation of the law, devoured the meat while the blood was still in it. Saul hastened to prevent this crime, and commanded a large stone to be rolled forward, on which the cattle might be slain, and the blood flow off. Worse than all, Jonathan was found to have violated the vow, of which he was ignorant, by tasting a little wild honey. Saul was about to sacrifice

his noble and victorious son for this breach of discipline, and the Hebrew annals might have anticipated the glory or the crime of the Roman Torquatus, but the people, with more humane feeling, interfered, and forbade the execution.

Saul continued to wage a successful war with the enemies on all quarters: the most harassing and unconquerable were the wild tribes of the desert, called the Amalekites. These fierce marauders constantly hovered on the borders, swelled the Philistine armies, or followed in the rear, like Tartar hordes, pillaging and massacring; and, as the Israelites had no cavalry, retreated without loss to the security of their deserts. It was a cruel but inevitable policy to carry a war of extermination into their country. There was an old feud of blood between the nations, since their first attack on the Israelites near Sinai. The war-law of nations, and necessity, as well as the divine command, justified this measure. Even the flocks and herds were to be involved in the general destruction, lest the scattered fugitives (for the tribe was not so entirely annihilated but that it appeared again in force during David's residence at Ziklag) should re-assemble, and form a new settlement on the Israelitish frontier. In the conduct of this expedition Saul again transgressed the divine commandment: he reserved the best part of the spoil, under the pretext of offering it in sacrifice, and spared the life of the king. There seems to be an obvious policy in this command to destroy all plunder, lest the Israelites should have been tempted to make marauding excursions upon their neighbours, and by degrees be trained up as

an ambitious and conquering people. This danger the lawgiver clearly foresaw, if they should fall under a monarchy. Agag, the king of the Amalekites, to whom the Jews owed long arrears of vengeance for his cruelties to their countrymen, was hewn in pieces before the altar by the command of Samuel—a fearful example to the merciless chieftains of the wild tribes: *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.* But his repeated acts of disobedience had destroyed all hope of finding in Saul a religious and constitutional king, punctual in his conformity to the law of the land and to the divine commandment. Another fatal objection to his sovereignty, and that of his race, began to display itself: he was seized with the worst malady to which mankind is subject; and as the paroxysms of his insanity became more frequent and violent, the brave, though intractable warrior sank into a moody and jealous tyrant.

The early history of David is involved in considerable difficulty. The events are here related in what appears the most easy and natural order. Samuel, by the divine command, went down to Bethlehem to sacrifice, and there selected and anointed as king the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse; a beautiful youth, then employed in his father's pastures, where he had already signalized his bravery by combating and slaying two wild beasts, a lion and a bear. A short time after, in the course of the Philistine war, the whole army of the Israelites was defied by a gigantic champion, Goliath of Gath, who was almost cased in brazen armour. Notwithstanding a splendid reward offered

by Saul, no warrior dared to confront this terrible foe. Suddenly a youth, of modesty and piety equal to his beauty and valour, appeared; accepted the combat, slew the insulting Philistine with a stone from his sling, and returned in triumph, with the head of the enemy, to the camp. This bold achievement endeared David to the kindred spirit of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and proved the commencement of a romantic friendship, one of the most beautiful incidents in the Jewish annals. But in their triumphant songs the maidens of Israel had raised the fame of David above that of Saul: deep and rankling jealousy sank into the distempered mind of the monarch. For several years the increasing malady preyed upon his spirit, till it was thought that the power of music (in modern times, and among nations less susceptible of deep emotions from sound, employed not without success in cases of derangement) might soothe him to composure. David, who may have passed the intermediate time in a prophetic school, had attained that exquisite skill in music and poetry which appears in the energy and tenderness of his psalms. He was summoned to attend upon the king. At first the wayward spirit of Saul is allayed; but the paroxysms return: twice he attempts the life of David; but his trembling hand cannot direct the spear with fatal force. In his lucid interval he promotes David to a military command, in which the future king acquires universal popularity. A short time after, Saul promises him his daughter in marriage, on the invidious condition that he should bring the fore-skins of a hundred Philistines. David and his troop

slays two hundred ; and receives not Merab, the daughter of Saul who had been promised to him at first, but Michal, who loved him tenderly, as his reward. In a conference with the Philistine chieftains, he acquired great reputation, even among the enemy, for his wisdom in counsel. The jealousy of Saul again broke out ; but was allayed by the friendly interference of Jonathan. New triumphs of David excited new hostility ; and hardly saved by a stratagem of his wife, who placed an image in his bed, he fled to Samuel, at Ramah. Officers were dispatched to seize him : they found him employed among the sacred choir, who, with Samuel at their head, were chaunting some of their solemn religious hymns. The messengers were seized with the same enthusiasm, and mingled their voices with those of the prophets. Three times the awe of the inspired prophets thus prevented the officers of Saul from executing his commands. At length Saul himself set forth with the same hostile design ; but his melancholy spirit was not proof against the sacred contagion ; the early and gentle associations of his youth arose within him ; he too cast off his royal habits, and took his former place in the devotional assembly.

After this reconciliation, David was rescued from new danger, by the generous intervention of Jonathan. This noble youth not merely sacrificed his hopes of a kingly succession to his friend, the designated heir of the throne ; but, confronting the worst paroxysm of his father's frenzy, had nearly lost his life. The lance aimed at him missed its blow. David was made acquainted with the failure



of his friend's interference, by a concerted signal; and after taking a long farewell of Jonathan, he made his escape to Nob, a sacerdotal city in the tribe of Benjamin. Here he pretended a secret mission from the king; deceived by his plausible story, in order to hasten him on his way, the priest bestowed on him a part of the bread offering, which it was profanation in any but those of Levitical race to touch; and the more valuable present of Goliath's sword, which had been laid up as a trophy. David then fled to Gath; but mistrusting the hospitality of the Philistine king, he feigned idiotcy, and escaped to a wild cave, that of Adullam, where he became the captain of an independent troop of adventurers, composed of the discontented and distressed from all quarters. He was joined by some marauders, warriors of remarkable bravery, from the tribe of Gad, who crossed the Jordan, and placed themselves under his banner. The devoted attachment of these men to their chieftain was shown in a gallant exploit performed by three of them, who broke through the Philistine army to procure water for David, which he had earnestly wished to have from his native fountain in Bethlehem. But David would not taste water purchased at such a risk as the lives of three brave men—he *poured it out to the Lord*. This gallant troop undertook no enterprize against their native country, but they fell on the Philistine army, who were besieging some valuable corn magazines, at Keilah, and defeated them with great slaughter.

Saul, in the mean time, had wreaked dreadful vengeance on the priesthood. From the infor-

mation of Doeg, an Edomite, he had been apprised of the service rendered to David at Nob by Abimelech. His jealous nature construed this into a general conspiracy of the whole order. He commanded their indiscriminate slaughter; his awe-struck followers refused to imbrue their hands in holy blood; and Saul was forced to employ the less scrupulous arm of an alien, the sanguinary Doeg. Eighty-five of the sacred order were slain, Abiathar, the son of Abimelech, fled to David. After this atrocity, Saul set out in pursuit of David, and had almost surprised him at Keilah. The fugitive, having entrusted his family to the generous protection of the king of Moab, fled from cave to rock, from desert to fastness, perpetually making hair-breadth escapes, yet disdaining to avail himself of any advantage, or to commit any violence against the person of his royal enemy, who was twice within his power. Once the king retired to sleep in a cave at Engedi, the inner part of which was the lurking-place of David. He cut off the skirt of his robe, and then making himself known, expressed his repentance for having so far ventured to desecrate the royal person. The better spirit of Saul revived, and a temporary accommodation took place. A second time David, by the negligence of his guard, surprised the king, sleeping as before, in his tent; he repressed the murderous intentions of his companion, Abiathar; but to show what he might have done, carried away a spear and a cruise of water that stood by his bed-side. He then, from the top of a hill, reproved Abner, Saul's general, for keeping so negligent a watch over the sacred

person of the monarch. The magnanimity of David was equalled by the generous fidelity of Jonathan, who, regardless of his own advancement, the great object of his father's jealousy, expressed his anxious desire that David might succeed to the throne of Israel, and he himself fill the subordinate place of *his vizier*. But the resentment of Saul is implacable: he gives to another David's wife, Michal: and David himself, like Themistocles or Coriolanus, takes refuge in the capital of his country's enemy; but with no design either of hostility to his native land, or even of revenge against the ungrateful king. Achish assigns him the town of Ziklag for his residence, where he dwells with his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, the widow of the churlish Nabal, from whom, during his freebooting life, he had demanded a supply of provisions, in return for the protection which his troops had afforded to the pastures of the Israelites. Abigail had arrested his wrath from her parsimonious husband, who refused the succour required, by propitiatory gifts; and Nabal, dying of drunkenness and terror, David took her as his wife. Thus an involuntary exile, David found himself in great difficulty to avoid embarking in hostilities against his native land. For some time he deceived the Philistine king by making inroads on the wild tribes of the desert, while he pretended that his troops had been employed in ravaging Judea. His embarrassment increased when the king of the Philistines seized the favourable opportunity to renew the war; and he was formally summoned to range his forces under the banner of his new liege lord. He appeared at the ren-

deztvous ; but he was fortunately relieved from this difficult position by the jealous mistrust of the Philistine chieftains. Dismissed from the invading army, he found on his return to Ziklag that his old enemies, the Amalekites, had made a sudden descent on his residence, burnt the city, and carried off all the women and children. David pursues, overtakes, falls on them by night, slaughters them without mercy, and having rescued the captives, returns laden with booty.

The end of the unhappy Saul drew near. Ill supported by his subjects, many of whom, even in the remotest districts, seem to have maintained a friendly correspondence with David, he determined to risk his crown and kingdom on a great battle with the Philistines. Still, however, haunted with that insatiable desire of searching into the secrets of futurity, inseparable from uncivilized man, he knew not to what quarter to turn. The priests, who had escaped the massacre, outraged by his cruelty, had forsaken him ; the Urim and Thummim was with Abiathar, he knew not where. The prophets stood aloof ; no dreams visited his couch ; he had persecuted even the unlawful diviners. He hears at length of a female necromancer, a woman with the spirit of Ob : strangely similar in sound to the Obeah women in the West Indies.

To the cave-dwelling of this woman, in Endor, the monarch proceeds in disguise. The woman at first alleges her fears of the severity with which the laws against necromancy were then executed. Saul promises her impunity. He commands her to raise the spirit of Samuel. At this daring de-

mand of raising a man of such dignity and importance, the woman first recognizes, or pretends to recognise, her royal visitant. "Whom seest thou?" says the king; "Mighty ones ascending from the earth."—"Of what form?" "An old man covered with a mantle."—Saul in terror bows his head to the earth; and, it should seem, not daring to look up, receives from the voice of the spectre the awful intimation of his defeat and death. On the reality of this apparition we presume not to decide: the figure, if figure there were, was not seen by Saul; and, excepting the event of the approaching battle, the spirit said nothing which the living prophet had not said before repeatedly and publicly. But the fact is curious, as showing the popular belief of the Jews in departed spirits to have been the same with that of most other nations.

The prophecy, like others, may have contributed to its own accomplishment. In the bloody battle of Gilboa, the Israelites were totally defeated; Jonathan and the other sons of Saul were slain; and the desperate monarch, determined not to outlive his fall, commanded his armour-bearer to pierce him with his sword. The faithful servant refused to obey. His master then fell on his own sword, but the wound not being mortal, he called on a youth, an Amalekite, to drive the weapon home. The faithful armour-bearer slew himself on his master's corpse. The bodies of Saul and Jonathan were taken by the Philistines, treated with great indignity, and that of Saul hung on the walls of the city of Beth-Shan, afterwards Scythopolis. It was soon after rescued by a daring



incursion made by the inhabitants of Jabesh, a city beyond Jordan, who, remembering how Saul had rescued their city from the cruelty of the Ammonites at the commencement of his reign, displayed that rarest of virtues, gratitude to a fallen monarch ; and adorned the annals of their country with one of its most noble incidents.

The news of the battle of Gilboa soon reached David. The young Amalekite took possession of the bracelet and ornaments of Saul, and carried them with all possible speed to his designated successor ; but David ordered him to execution for thus assisting in the death and plundering the person of the king. He expressed the deepest sorrow, not merely for the defeat of Israel and the death of his dear friend Jonathan, but also for that of the gallant monarch, whose early valour demanded unmixed admiration, whose malady might extenuate much of his later aberrations. During David's wild and adventurous life, his poetic faculty had been constantly kept alive. Many of his most affecting elegies receive a deeper interest when read in connexion with his personal history ; but none is more touching than that which he composed on the death of Saul and Jonathan—*lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their death not divided.*

David did not waste the time in lamentations : he suddenly appeared at Hebron, was welcomed by the tribe of Judah, and immediately raised, by common acclamation, to the vacant throne. Abner, the most powerful of the military leaders in the army of Saul, and his near relative, appealed to the jealousy of the northern tribes against

Judah, and set up Ishbosheth, Saul's only surviving son, as king. Ishbosheth was totally unfit for the high situation; and after Abner had supported the contest for more than two years by his personal weight and activity, on some disgust he fell off to David. But unfortunately in a battle which had taken place at Gibeon, he had slain Asahel, the brother of Joab, David's most powerful follower. Joab in revenge assassinated him with his own hand. David was deeply grieved, and, as well to show his regret, as to remove all suspicion of participation in the crime, Abner received an honourable burial, and the king appeared as chief mourner. The loss of Abner was fatal to the party of Ishbosheth, and as the falling never want enemies, he was put to death by some of his own followers. Rechab and Baanah, the murderers, instead of meeting with a welcome reception and reward from David, were executed for their crime.

The power and character of David, now thirty years old, triumphed over all the jealousies of the tribes. The whole nation received him as their king; their united forces ranged themselves under his banner; their most valiant captains took pride in obeying his commands. The Philistines, who, from the terror of his name, seem immediately to have withdrawn within their own frontier, were defeated in all quarters. Yet the exterminating character of the former wars with this people may be estimated from the number of troops contributed from the several tribes, if indeed the numbers are correct. Judah musters only 6,000 men, Ephraim,

20,800, Zebulun, 50,000 ; the powerful tribes beyond Jordan, 120,000 men.

After residing seven years and a half at Hebron, David determined to found a capital city, which should thenceforth be the seat of the government and the religion. Josephus asserts that the foundation of Jerusalem and the building of the temple, were expressly enjoined by Moses, and that he even anticipated the nature of the hill, on which the latter was to stand, and the size of its stones. But, except in one obscure prophetic passage, there is no allusion to Jerusalem in the writings of the lawgiver. The German writer, Herder, has drawn an ingenious inference from a verse in the same last prophecy of Moses, where the passage is found, in which Jerusalem is supposed to be designated. It is said of Zebulun, *they shall call the people into the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness*. This mountain he supposes to be Tabor, on the borders of Issachar and Zebulun, which stands alone at the edge of a vast plain, with a fine level space on its top, admirably calculated for the site of a city ; while the sides are richly clothed with wood, and capable of a high degree of cultivation. Herder dwells with great eloquence on the commanding majesty and the strength of a situation which is seen on all sides from an immense distance, and overlooked by no neighbouring eminence. It is an obvious objection to this hypothesis that Tabor fell early, in the days of Joshua, into the power of the Israelites, but no attempt was made either to found a city, or to transfer thither the tabernacle and ark of God.

But Jerusalem was destined to become the seat of the Hebrew government, and the scene of more extraordinary events, more strange and awful vicissitudes, than any city in the universe, not excepting Rome. There stood on the borders of Judah and Benjamin a strong fortress, which had remained in the possession of the native inhabitants, the Jebusites, since the conquest of Canaan. The natural strength and long security of the citadel tempted the Jebusites to treat a summons to surrender with insolent defiance. David, however, took both the town and the citadel, which stood on Mount Sion, and there established his royal residence. The situation of Jerusalem is remarkably imposing; it stands on several eminences of unequal heights, some parts of which slope gradually, on others the sides are abrupt and precipitous. All around, excepting to the north, run deep ravines or valleys, like entrenchments formed by nature, beyond which arise mountains of greater height, which encircle and seem to protect the city. It is open only to the north, as if the way had been levelled, for the multitudes from the rest of the tribes to arrive at the holy city, without difficulty or obstacle. The hill of Sion, on which David's city stood, rose to the south, it was divided by a deep and narrow ravine from the other hills, over which the city gradually spread.

The next great step of David was the re-establishment of the national religion with suitable dignity and magnificence. Had David acted solely from political motives, this measure had been the wisest he could adopt. The solemn assembling of the tribes would not only cement the political

union of the monarchy, but also increase the opulence of his capital, and promote the internal commerce of the country: while it brought the heads of the tribes, and indeed the whole people, under the cognizance and personal knowledge of the sovereign, it fixed the residence of the more eminent among the priesthood in the metropolis.

The ark, after the restoration by the Philistines, had probably remained at Kirjath Jearim; from thence it was moved with the greatest state, attended by David at the head of 30,000 men. It was placed on a car; Uzzah, who presumed to touch it, was struck dead. Wherever it moved, it was escorted with instruments of music and hymns, which recalled all the former wonders of the Jewish history, the triumphs of God over his enemies. That noble ode, the 68th Psalm, *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered*, is generally supposed to have been written on this occasion. The ark remained for three months in the house of Obed-Edom, while preparations were making for its solemn reception within the city. When the pavilion was ready, David made a feast for the whole people, and himself having cast off his royal robes, and put on a simple linen tunic, joined the procession, which was conducted with that dramatic union of music, singing, and dancing, common to the festal worship of all southern nations. On this second removal the 105th and 106th Psalms were sung. Michal alone, the daughter of Saul, the wife of David's youth, whom on his accession he had taken back, entered not into the general enthusiasm; she rebuked her husband for thus derogating from the royal dig-



nity, of which she seems to have entertained truly Oriental notions. David, offended by her presumption and irreligion, from that time abstained from her bed.

David had already built a royal palace, with the assistance of Hiram, king of Tyre, of whom he received cedar timber from Lebanon, and experienced artisans. This was the commencement of that amity between the Tyrians and the Hebrews so mutually advantageous to the two nations, the one agricultural, and the other commercial. The religious king, in pursuance of the wise policy which led him to found a capital, and reinstate the religion in its former splendour, determined to build a permanent temple. The tabernacle might be suitable to the God of the wandering Israelites, but a more solid and durable edifice seemed accordant to the Deity of a settled people. *See, now*, says the king to the prophet Nathan, *I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.* The prophet at first highly approved of this pious design; but shortly after, the divine commandment was proclaimed that David was to desist from the great national enterprise, and leave the glory of it to his son, who was to inherit his throne. The reason of the prohibition is most remarkable, entirely in unison with the spirit of the Mosaic institutions, which aimed at forming a peaceful, not a warlike or conquering people. *Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.* From whence could so sublime a precept descend, amidst a people situated

as the Jews then were, unless from the great Father of Love and Mercy?

The sanguinary career of David's victorious arms was not yet terminated. On every side he extended his frontier to the furthest limits of the promised land, and secured the whole country by the subjection or unrelenting extermination of its restless enemies. He defeated the Philistines, and took Gath and a great part of their dominion. He conquered and established garrisons in the whole territory of Edom: Hadad, the last of the royal race, fled to Egypt. He treated the Moabites with still greater severity, putting to the sword a great part of the population. He overthrew the Syrians of Zobah, (supposed by Michaelis to be the kingdom of Nisibis, bordering on Armenia, which was famous for its breed of horses;) Zobah lay between the Transjordanic tribes and the Euphrates: they were routed with a loss of 1,000 chariots, 700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot. Faithful to the law, he mutilated all the horses, except a certain number reserved for state and splendour. The Syrians of Damascus marched to the defence of their kindred, but retreated, having suffered the loss of 22,000 men. The kingdom of Hamath entered into a strict alliance with the conqueror. Thus the Euphrates became the eastern boundary of the Hebrew kingdom; the northern was secured by the occupation of the fortresses in the kingdom of Damascus, and by the friendly state of Tyre; the southern by the ruin of the Philistines and the military possession of Edom.

In the height of his power, David did not forget his generous friend, Jonathan. One of his sons,

Mephibosheth, a lame youth, still survived. He was sent for, kindly received, and assigned a maintenance at the royal table. David soon after restored to him the personal estate of Saul, which was entrusted to the management of his adherent, Ziba. The estate must have been considerable, much larger than the patrimonial inheritance of Saul ; perhaps, increased by confiscation during his possession of royal authority. A new war broke out, shortly after, against the Ammonites, who had entered into a defensive alliance with several of the Syrian princes. The war originated in this manner. On the accession of Hanun, the son of Nahash, to the throne, David, who had been on friendly terms with the father, sent an embassy of congratulation. The Ammonites, suspecting the ambassadors to be spies, treated them with the greatest contumely ; shaved their beards, the worst insult that can be inflicted in the East, cut their garments short, and dismissed them. The forces of David marched immediately into the country, commanded by Joab and Abishai, who totally defeated the Ammonites and their allies. Another formidable army of Syrians making its appearance, David took arms in person, and discomfited them with the loss of 700 chariots.

So far unexampled splendour and prosperity had marked the reign of David ; the remainder was as gloomy as disastrous. His own crime was the turning point of his fortunes. Walking on the terrace roof of his palace, he looked down on the bath of a neighbouring harem, in which he saw a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a man of Canaanitish descent, but one of his bravest

soldiers. He became enamoured of her, and sent for her to his palace. To cover the consequences of his crime, her husband was summoned from the army, then occupied with the siege of Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites. But Uriah, either from secret suspicion, or mere accident, avoided the snare ; the brave warrior refused to enjoy the comforts and luxuries of his home, while his companions in arms were sleeping in the open air. Foiled in his purpose, David plunged headlong down the precipitous declivity of guilt : he sent secret orders that Uriah should be exposed on a post of danger, where his death was inevitable. He did not perpetrate this double crime without remonstrance. The prophet Nathan addressed to him the beautiful and affecting apologue of the rich man, who, while possessed of abundant flocks, took by force the one ewe lamb of the poor man to feast a stranger. The bitterness of the king's repentance may be estimated by his own sad and pathetic expressions in the poems, particularly the 51st Psalm, composed on this humiliating subject. But henceforth the hand of God was against him. The Ammonitish war, indeed, was brought to a favourable termination ; Joab, after wasting the whole country, pressed the siege of Rabbah. David joined the army, and took the city ; where he wreaked the most dreadful vengeance on the inhospitable people. All, those at least, who were found in arms, were put *under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made to pass through the brick kiln*. The long hostilities of the nations around Palestine were not likely to mitigate the ferocity of the usages of war ; and the Ammonites seem to have been the

most savage people of the whole region, and were for this reason, as well as on account of their conduct to the ambassadors, whose persons are sacred among the fiercest tribes, selected as fearful examples to the enemies of Israel. But now the life of David began to darken; a curse, fatal as that, which the old Grecian tragedy delights to paint, hung over his house. Incest, fratricide, rebellion of the son against the father, civil war, the expulsion of the king from his capital—such are the crimes and calamities which blacken the annals of his later years. The child, of which Bathsheba was pregnant, died; but its loss was replaced by the birth of the famous Solomon. Worse evils followed. Amnon, the eldest born son of David, committed an incestuous rape on Tamar, the sister of Absalom. Absalom (for in many eastern nations, as has before been observed, the honour of the brother is wounded more deeply even than that of the parent, by the violation of an unmarried female) washed out the stain in the blood of his brother. The murderer fled, but, by the intervention of Joab, David's faithful captain, he was permitted to return; and at length, by a singular artifice, admitted to his father's presence. A woman of Tekoah was directed to appear in mourning apparel before the king. Of her two sons, one had slain the other in an accidental quarrel, the family sought to put the survivor to death, and leave her alone in her childless house. The analogy of her situation with his own, struck the mind of David; though he detected the artifice; in evil hour, he recalled his offending and exiled son to Jerusalem; but still refused him permission to appear in his court.



Before long, the daring youth set fire to a field of barley belonging to Joab, declaring that he had rather appear before his father as a criminal, than be excluded from his presence. An interview followed, in which the parental feeling of David triumphed over his justice, and his prudence. Absalom was a youth of exquisite beauty, remarkable for his luxuriant hair; his manners were highly popular, and by consummate address, and artful impeachment of his father's negligence in the administration of justice, he gradually won the hearts of the whole people. He was aided by Ahitophel, a man of the most profound subtlety, and acute political foresight. Having thus prepared the way, he suddenly fled to Hebron, raised the standard of revolt, and, in a short time, the conspiracy grew so formidable, that David was obliged to fly from his capital. He went forth from the eastern gate, crossed the brook Kidron, and ascended the Mount of Olives, from whence he looked back upon the city which he had founded, or ornamented, the abode, for many years, of all his power, his glory, and his happiness. He was leaving it in his old age, perhaps, for ever, a miserable fugitive, driven forth by a people, whose independence as a nation he had established, and by an unnatural son, whose life had been his gift. He did not attempt to disguise his sorrow: with his head covered, and his feet bare, he began his melancholy pilgrimage, amid the tears and lamentations of the people, who could not witness without commiseration this sad example of the uncertainty of human greatness. Yet the greatness of David did not depend upon his royal state; it was within

his lofty soul, and inseparable from his commanding character. Neither his piety, nor his generosity, nor his prudence, deserted him. The faithful priests, Zadok and Abiathar, followed him with the ark; he sent them back, unwilling that the sacred treasures of God should be exposed to the perils and ignominy of his flight. He remonstrated with Ittai, a stranger, on the imprudence of adhering to his falling fortunes. At the same time, he left Hushai, a man of great address, to counterwork the intrigues of the crafty Ahitophel. He had more trials to endure; as he passed Bahurim, a man named Shimei loaded him with the bitterest and most contemptuous execrations. David endured his reproaches with the humblest resignation, as punishments from the Almighty, nor would he permit his followers to attempt the chastisement of the offender. Absalom, in the mean time, entered Jerusalem without resistance. It is a singular usage in the East, that he who assumes the crown of a deceased or dethroned monarch, becomes master of his harem. Absalom, by Ahitophel's advice, took public possession of that of David. Ahitophel urged the immediate pursuit of the fugitive monarch, but Hushai having insinuated himself into Absalom's counsels, insisted on the danger of driving so brave a warrior to desperation. *They be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds like a bear robbed of her whelps.* He advised, as a more prudent course, the assembling an army from the whole nation. The counsel of Hushai prevailed; and during the time thus gained, David escaped beyond the Jordan, where he was hos-

pitably received, particularly by the wealthy Barzillai. The crafty politician, Ahitophel, saw at once the failure of his scheme, and to anticipate the vengeance of his enemies, destroyed himself. The event justified his sagacity. A powerful army assembled round David, and the termination of the contest depended on a decisive battle to be fought beyond the Jordan. Amasa commanded the troops of Absalom, Joab those of David. Before the conflict began, the fond father gave the strictest charge, that the life of his rebellious son should be respected. The battle took place on ground encumbered with wood; and Absalom, riding at full speed, got entangled in the boughs of an oak. Thus, suspended by his beautiful hair, the relentless Joab found him, and transfixed his body with three darts. David awaited the issue of the conflict in the city of Mahanaim. The messengers came rapidly one after the other to announce the victory. The king only answered with the question, *Is the young man Absalom safe?* His conduct, when the fatal tidings at last arrived, can be described in no other language but that of the sacred historian. *The king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept, and as he wept, thus he said, O my son, Absalom! my son, my son, Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!* This ill-timed, though natural grief, roused the indignation of the hardy Joab, and David was constrained to repress it. On the death of Absalom the nation returned to its allegiance, the king, with humane policy, published a general amnesty, from which, not even the in-

sulting Shimei was excepted. Among the faithful adherents of David, the aged Barzillai declined all reward; his advanced age was incapable of any gratification from honour or pleasure; his son, Chimham, was advanced to the highest dignity. Ziba, the faithless steward of Mephibosheth, endeavoured to implicate his master in the conspiracy, in order to secure the confiscated estate. He succeeded at first, but Mephibosheth exculpating himself, proved that he deeply mourned the expulsion of David, and had only been prevented following his fortunes by his infirmity and the craft of Ziba. The decree was revoked.

But at this period, the seeds of fatal jealousy between the northern tribes and that of Judah were sown. The northern tribes were exasperated, because the men of Judah took upon themselves to reinstate the king without their assent and concurrence. An adventurer, named Sheba, put himself at the head of a revolt. Amasa, the general of Absalom, suspected of traitorous dealings with the insurgents, was barbarously dispatched by Joab; and Sheba shut up in the city of Abel, where he was put to death by his own party, and his head thrown over the wall. These two rebellions were followed, (if the order of events be observed by the sacred historian,) or long preceded, (if we are to judge from probability,) by a famine, attributed to some obscure crime of Saul and his bloody family, in slaying the Gibeonites, the attendants on the priesthood. Seven descendants of Saul were put to death: but the barbarity of the transaction is relieved by the tender fidelity of Rizpah, one of Saul's con-

cubines, who watched for months the remains of her unhappy children, lest the vultures or wild beasts should destroy them. David afterwards gave honourable burial to their bones, as well as to those of Saul and Jonathan. The civil wars, perhaps the three years' famine, had so enfeebled the strength of the kingdom, that the restless Philistines began to renew hostilities. Four gigantic champions, one of whom had put the life of David in peril, having been slain by his valiant chieftains, the war terminated.

David, now reinstated in all his strength and splendour, determined to take a census of his vast dominions, which extended from Lebanon to the frontiers of Egypt, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. The numbers differ, but the lowest gives 800,000 men fit to bear arms in Israel, 500,000, in Judah. Benjamin and Levi were not reckoned. Whether in direct violation of the law, David began to contemplate schemes of foreign conquest, and to aspire to the fame of a Sesostris; or whether the census exhibited the relative strength of Judah, so weak at the commencement of David's reign, as become formidable to the rest of the tribes; this measure was reprobated by the nation in general, as contrary to the Divine command, and as impolitic, even by the unscrupulous Joab. It called down the anger of Providence. The king was commanded to choose between seven years' famine, three months' of unsuccessful war and defeat, or three days' pestilence. David, with wise humility, left the judgment in the hand of God. The pestilence broke out, 70,000 lives were lost; the ma-







lady spread to Jerusalem, but the king was commanded to build an altar on Mount Moriah, the site of the future temple, then occupied by the threshing-floor of Araunah, one of the old Jebusite race. Araunah offered to make a gift of the place, and all the utensils, to be burnt for sacrifice ; but David insisted on paying the full price of the ground. There the altar was built, and the plague immediately ceased.

The remaining years of David were spent in making the most costly preparations for the building of the temple, and in securing the succession to his son Solomon, to whom this great trust was to be bequeathed. As his time drew near, those evils began to display themselves which are inseparable from Oriental monarchies, where polygamy prevails ; and where among children, from many wives, of different ranks, no certain rule of succession is established. Factions began to divide the army, the royal household, and even the priesthood. Adonijah, the brother of Absalom, supported by the turbulent Joab, and by Abiathar, the priest, assembled a large body of adherents, at a festival. When this intelligence was communicated to David, without the slightest delay he commanded Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, with Benaiah, one of his most valiant captains, to take Solomon down to Gihon, to anoint and proclaim him. The young king re-entered the city amid the loudest acclamations ; the party of Adonijah, who were still at their feast, dispersed and fled. Adonijah took refuge at the altar : his life was spared. David, after this success, assembled first the great body of leading men in the state,

and afterwards, perhaps, a more extensive and popular convention of the people, before whom he designated Solomon as his successor, commended to the zeal and piety of the people the building of the temple, and received their contributions towards the great national work.

As his death approached, he strictly enjoined his son to adhere to the Mosaic laws and to the divine constitution. He recommended him to watch, with a jealous eye, the bold and restless Joab ; a man, who, however brave and faithful, was dangerous from his restless ambition, and from the savage unscrupulousness with which he shed the blood of his enemies. Abner and Amasa had both fallen by his hand, without warrant or authority from the king. Solomon, *according to his wisdom*, on the first appearance of treasonable intention, was to put him to death without mercy. Shimei was in the same manner to be cut off, if he should betray the least mark of disaffection. But to the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite, the successor of David was to show the utmost gratitude and kindness.

Thus having provided for the security of the succession, the maintenance of the law, and the lasting dignity of the national religion, David breathed his last, having reigned forty years over the flourishing and powerful monarchy of which he may be considered the founder. He had succeeded to a kingdom distracted with civil dissension, environed on every side by powerful and victorious enemies, without a capital, almost without an army, without any bond of union between the tribes. He left a compact and united state, stretching from the frontier of Egypt to the foot of Lebanon, from the



Euphrates to the sea. He had crushed the power of the Philistines, subdued or curbed all the adjacent kingdoms: he had formed a lasting and important alliance with the great city of Tyre. He had organized an immense disposable force: every month 24,000 men, furnished in rotation by the tribes, appeared in arms, and were trained as the standing militia of the country. At the head of his army were officers of consummate experience, and, what was more highly esteemed in the warfare of the time, extraordinary personal activity, strength, and valour. His heroes remind us of those of Arthur or Charlemagne, excepting that the armour of the feudal chieftains constituted their superiority; here, main strength of body and dauntless fortitude of mind. The Hebrew nation owed the long peace of the son's reign to the bravery and wisdom of the father. If the rapidity with which a kingdom rises to unexampled prosperity, and the permanence, as far as human wisdom can provide, of that prosperity, be a fair criterion of the abilities and character of a sovereign, few kings in history can compete with David. His personal character has been often discussed; but both by his enemies, and even by some of his learned defenders, with an ignorance of, or inattention to his age and country, in writers of such acuteness as Bayle, not less melancholy than surprising. Both parties have been content to take the expression of the *man after God's own heart*, in a strict and literal sense. Both have judged, by modern, European, and Christian notions, the chieftain of an Eastern and comparatively barbarous people. If David in his exile became a freebooter, he assumed a pro-



fession, like the pirate in ancient Greece, by no means dishonourable. If he employed craft, or even falsehood, in some of his enterprises, chivalrous or conscientious attachment to truth was probably not one of the virtues of his day. He had his harem, like other eastern kings. He waged war, and revenged himself on his foreign enemies with merciless cruelty, like other warriors of his age and country. His one great crime violated the immutable and universal laws of morality, and therefore admits of no excuse. On the other hand, his consummate personal bravery and military talent—his generosity to his enemies—his fidelity to his friends—his knowledge of, and steadfast attention to the true interests of his country—his exalted piety and gratitude towards his God, justify the zealous and fervent attachment of the Jewish people to the memory of their great monarch.

The three most eminent men in the Hebrew annals, Moses, David, and Solomon, were three of their most distinguished poets. The hymns of David excel no less in sublimity and tenderness of expression than in loftiness and purity of religious sentiment. In comparison with them, the sacred poetry of all other nations sinks into mediocrity. They have embodied so exquisitely the universal language of religious emotion, that (a few fierce and vindictive passages excepted, natural in the warrior-poet of a sterner age) they have entered, with unquestioned propriety, into the ritual of the holier and more perfect religion of Christ. The songs which cheered the solitude of the desert-caves of Engedi, or resounded from the voice of the

Hebrew people as they wound along the glens or the hill-sides of Judæa, have been repeated for ages in almost every part of the habitable world, in the remotest islands of the ocean, among the forests of America or the sands of Africa. How many human hearts have they softened, purified, exalted!—of how many wretched beings have they been the secret consolation!—on how many communities have they drawn down the blessings of Divine Providence, by bringing the affections into unison with their deep devotional fervour!

SOLOMON succeeded to the Hebrew kingdom at the age of twenty. He was environed by designing, bold, and dangerous enemies. The pretensions of Adonijah still commanded a powerful party: Abiathar swayed the priesthood; Joab the army. The singular connexion in public opinion between the title to the crown, and the possession of the deceased monarch's harem, has been already noticed. Adonijah, in making request for Abishag, a youthful concubine taken by David in his old age, was considered as insidiously renewing his claims to the sovereignty. Solomon saw at once the wisdom of his father's dying admonition: he seized the opportunity of crushing all future opposition, and all danger of a civil war. He caused Adonijah to be put to death; suspended Abiathar from his office, and banished him from Jerusalem: and though Joab fled to the altar, he commanded him to be slain, for the two murders of which he had been guilty, those of Abner and Amasa. Shimei, another dangerous character, was commanded to reside in Jerusalem, on pain of death if he should quit the city. Three years

afterwards he was detected in a suspicious journey to Gath, on the Philistine border; and having violated the compact, he suffered the penalty.

Thus secured by the policy of his father from internal enemies, by the terror of his victories from foreign invasion, Solomon commenced his peaceful reign, during which Judah and Israel dwelt safely, *every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba*. His justice was proverbial. Among his first acts after his succession, it is related that after a costly sacrifice at Gibeon, the place where the tabernacle remained, God had appeared to him in a dream, and offered him whatever gift he chose: the wise king requested an understanding heart to judge the people. God not merely assented to his prayer, but added the gift of honour and riches. His judicial wisdom was displayed in the memorable history of the two women, who contested the right to a child. Solomon, in the wild spirit of oriental justice, commanded the infant to be divided before their faces: the heart of the real mother was struck with terror and abhorrence; while the false one consented to the horrible partition; and by this appeal to nature the cause was instantaneously decided.

The internal government of his extensive dominions next demanded the attention of Solomon. Besides the local and municipal governors, he divided the kingdom into twelve districts: over each of these he appointed a purveyor, for the collection of the royal tribute, which was received in kind; and thus the growing capital and the immense establishments of Solomon were abundantly furnished with provisions. Each purveyor sup-

plied the court for a month. The daily consumption of his household was 300 bushels of finer flour, 600 of a coarser sort ; 10 fatted, 20 other oxen ; 100 sheep ; besides poultry, and various kinds of venison. Provender was furnished for 40,000 horses, and a great number of dromedaries. Yet the population of the country did not, at first at least, feel these burthens : *Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.*

The foreign treaties of Solomon were as wisely directed to secure the profound peace of his dominions. He entered into a matrimonial alliance with the royal family of Egypt, whose daughter he received with great magnificence ; and he renewed the important alliance with the king of Tyre. The friendship of this monarch was of the highest value in contributing to the great royal and national work, the building of the temple. The cedar timber could only be obtained from the forests of Lebanon : the Sidonian artisans, celebrated in the Homeric poems, were the most skilful workmen in every kind of manufacture, particularly in the precious metals. Solomon entered into a regular treaty, by which he bound himself to supply the Tyrians with large quantities of corn ; receiving in return their timber, which was floated down to Joppa, and a large body of artificers. The timber was cut by his own subjects, of whom he raised a body of 30,000 ; 10,000 employed at a time, and relieving each other every month ; so that to one month of labour, they had two of rest. He raised two other corps, one of 70,000 porters of burthens, the other of 80,000 hewers of stone, who were

employed in the quarries among the mountains. All these labours were thrown, not on the Israelites, but on the strangers, who, chiefly of Canaanitish descent, had been permitted to inhabit the country. These preparations, in addition to those of King David, being completed, the work began. The eminence of Moriah, the Mount of Vision, i. e. the height seen afar from the adjacent country, which tradition pointed out as the spot where Abraham had offered his son—(where recently the plague had been stayed, by the altar built in the threshing-floor of Ornan or Araunah, the Jebusite,) rose on the east side of the city. Its rugged top was levelled with immense labour; its sides, which to the east and south were precipitous, were faced with a wall of stone, built up perpendicular from the bottom of the valley, so as to appear to those who looked down of most terrific height; a work of prodigious skill and labour, as the immense stones were strongly mortised together and wedged into the rock. Around the whole area or esplanade, an irregular quadrangle, was a solid wall of considerable height and strength: within this was an open court, into which the Gentiles were either from the first, or subsequently, admitted. A second wall encompassed another quadrangle, called the court of the Israelites. Along this wall, on the inside, ran a portico or cloister, over which were chambers for different sacred purposes. Within this again, another, probably a lower, wall, separated the court of the priests from that of the Israelites. To each court the ascent was by steps, so that the platform of the inner court was on a higher level than that of the outer.



The temple itself was rather a monument of the wealth than the architectural skill and science of the people. It was a wonder of the world, from the splendour of its materials more than the grace, boldness, or majesty of its height and dimensions. It had neither the colossal magnitude of the Egyptian, the simple dignity and perfect proportional harmony of the Grecian, nor perhaps the fantastic grace and lightness of modern Oriental architecture. Some writers, calling to their assistance the visionary temple of Ezekiel, have erected a most superb edifice ; to which there is this fatal objection, that if the dimensions of the prophet are taken as they stand in the text, the area of the temple and its courts would not only have covered the whole of Mount Moriah, but almost all Jerusalem. In fact our accounts of the temple of Solomon are altogether unsatisfactory. The details, as they now stand in the books of Kings and Chronicles, the only safe authorities, are unscientific, and, what is worse, contradictory. Josephus has evidently blended together the three temples, and attributed to the earlier all the subsequent additions and alterations. The temple, on the whole, was an enlargement of the tabernacle, built of more costly and durable materials. Like its model it retained the ground plan and disposition of the Egyptian, or rather of almost all the sacred edifices of antiquity : even its measurements are singularly in unison with some of the most ancient temples in Upper Egypt. It consisted of a propylæon, a temple, and a sanctuary ; called respectively the porch, the Holy place, and the Holy of Holies. Yet in some respects, if the measurements are correct, the temple

must rather have resembled the form of a simple Gothic church. In the front to the east stood the porch, a tall tower, rising to the height of 210 feet. Either within, or, like the Egyptian obelisks, before the porch, stood two pillars of brass; by one account 27, by another above 60 feet high; the latter statement probably including their capitals and bases. These were called Jachin and Boaz (Durability and Strength). The capitals of these were of the richest workmanship, with net-work, chain-work, and pomegranates. The porch was the same width with the temple, 35 feet; its depth  $17\frac{1}{2}$ . The length of the main building, including the holy place, 70 feet, and the holy of holies, 35, was in the whole 105 feet; the height  $52\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Josephus carries the whole building up to the height of the porch; but this is out of all credible proportion, making the height twice the length and six times the width. Along each side, and perhaps at the back of the main building, ran an aisle, divided into three stories of small chambers: the wall of the temple being thicker at the bottom, left a rest to support the beams of these chambers, which were not let into the wall. These aisles, the chambers of which were appropriated as vestiaries, treasuries, and for other sacred purposes, seem to have reached about halfway up the main wall of what we may call the nave and choir: the windows into the latter were probably above them; these were narrow, but widened inwards.

If the dimensions of the temple appear by no means imposing, it must be remembered that but a small part of the religious ceremonies took place within the walls. The Holy of Holies was entered

only once a year, and that by the High Priest alone. It was the secret and unapproachable shrine of the Divinity. The Holy Place, the body of the temple, admitted only the officiating priests. The open courts, called in popular language the temple, or rather the inner quadrangle, was in fact the great place of divine worship. Here, under the open air, were celebrated the great public and national rites, the processions, the offerings, the sacrifices; here stood the great tank for ablution, and the high altar for burnt offerings. But the costliness of the materials, the richness and variety of the details, amply compensated for the moderate dimensions of the building. It was such a sacred edifice as a traveller might have expected to find in El Dorado. The walls were of hewn stone, faced within with cedar, which was richly carved with knosps and flowers; the ceiling was of fir tree. But in every part gold was lavished with the utmost profusion; within and without, the floor, the walls, the ceiling, in short the whole house is described as overlaid with gold. The finest and purest—that of Parvaim, by some supposed to be Ceylon—was reserved for the sanctuary. Here the cherubim, which stood upon the covering of the ark, with their wings touching each wall, were entirely covered with gold. The sumptuous veil, of the richest materials and brightest colours, which divided the Holy of Holies from the holy place, was suspended on chains of gold. Cherubim, palm-trees, and flowers, the favourite ornaments, everywhere covered with gilding, were wrought in almost all parts. The altar within the temple and the table of shew-bread were likewise covered

with the same precious metal. All the vessels, the 10 candlesticks, 500 basons, and all the rest of the sacrificial and other utensils, were of solid gold. Yet the Hebrew writers seem to dwell with the greatest astonishment and admiration on the works which were founded in brass by Hiram, a man of Jewish extraction, who had learned his art at Tyre. Besides the lofty pillars above mentioned, there was a great tank, called a sea, of molten brass, supported on twelve oxen, three turned each way; this was  $17\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter.



THE BRAZEN SEA.

There was also a great altar, and ten large vessels for the purpose of ablution, called lavers, standing on bases or pedestals, the rims of which were richly ornamented with a border, on which were wrought figures of lions, oxen, and cherubim. The bases below were formed of four wheels, like those of a chariot.



LAVAR.

All the works in brass were cast in a place near the Jordan, where the soil was of a stiff clay suited to the purpose.



For seven years and a half the fabric arose in silence. All the timbers, the stones, even of the most enormous size, measuring between seventeen and eighteen feet, were hewn and fitted, so as to be put together without the sound of any tool whatever ; as it has been expressed, with great poetical beauty,

Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric grew.

At the end of this period, the temple and its courts being completed, the solemn dedication took place, with the greatest magnificence which the king and the nation could display. All the chieftains of the different tribes, and all of every order who could be brought together, assembled. David had already organized the priesthood and the Levites ; assigned to the 38,000 of the latter tribe, each his particular office : 24,000 were appointed for the common duties, 6000 as officers, 4000 as guards and porters, 4000 as singers and musicians. On this great occasion, the Dedication of the temple, all the tribe of Levi, without regard to their courses, the whole priestly order of every class, attended. Around the great brazen altar, which rose in the court of the priests before the door of the temple stood—in front the sacrificers, all around the whole choir, arrayed in white linen. 120 of these were trumpeters, the rest had cymbals, harps, and psalteries. Solomon himself took his place on an elevated scaffold, or raised throne of brass. The whole assembled nation crowded the spacious courts beyond. The ceremony began with the preparation of burnt offerings, so numerous that they could not be counted. At an appointed signal commenced

the more important part of the scene, the removal of the ark, the installation of the God of Israel in his new and appropriate dwelling, to the sound of all the voices and all the instruments, chaunting some of those splendid odes, the 47th, 97th, 98th, and 107th psalms. The ark advanced borne by the Levites, to the open portals of the temple. It can scarcely be doubted that the 24th Psalm, even if composed before, was adopted and used on this occasion. The singers, as it drew near the gate, broke out in these words—*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* It was answered from the other part of the choir—*Who is the King of Glory?*—the whole choir responded—*The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.* When the procession arrived at the Holy Place, the gates flew open; when it reached the Holy of Holies, the veil was drawn back. The ark took its place under the extended wings of the cherubim, which might seem to fold over, and receive it under their protection. At that instant all the trumpeters and singers were at once to *make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice, with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever, the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.* Thus the Divinity took possession of his sacred edifice. The king then

rose upon the brazen scaffold, knelt down, and spreading his hands towards heaven, uttered the prayer of consecration. The prayer was of unexampled sublimity: while it implored the perpetual presence of the Almighty, as the tutelar deity and sovereign of the Israelites, it recognised his spiritual and illimitable nature. *But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built.* It then recapitulated the principles of the Hebrew theocracy, the dependance of the national prosperity and happiness on the national conformity to the civil and religious law. As the king concluded in these emphatic terms—*Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant*—the cloud which had rested over the Holy of Holies grew brighter and more dazzling; fire broke out and consumed all the sacrifices; the priests stood without, awe-struck by the insupportable splendour; the whole people fell on their faces, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, *for he is good, for his mercy is for ever.* Which was the greater, the external magnificence, or the moral sublimity of this scene? Was it the temple, situated on its commanding eminence, with all its courts, the dazzling splendour of its materials, the innumerable multitudes, the priesthood in their gorgeous attire, the king with all the insignia of royalty, on his throne of burnished brass, the music,

the radiant cloud filling the temple, the sudden fire flashing upon the altar, the whole nation upon their knees? Was it not rather the religious grandeur of the hymns and of the prayer: the exalted and rational views of the Divine Nature, the union of a whole people in the adoration of the one Great, Incomprehensible, Almighty, Everlasting Creator!

This extraordinary festival, which took place at the time of that of Tabernacles, lasted for two weeks, twice the usual time: during this period 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep were sacrificed, every individual probably contributing to this great propitiatory rite; and the whole people feasting on those parts of the sacrifices which were not set apart for holy uses.

Though the chief magnificence of Solomon was lavished on the temple of God, yet the sumptuous palaces, which he erected for his own residence, display an opulence and profusion, which may vie with the older monarchs of Egypt or Assyria. The great palace stood in Jerusalem; it occupied thirteen years in building. A causeway bridged the deep ravine, and leading directly to the temple, united the part either of Acra or Sion, on which the palace stood, with Mount Moriah. In this palace was a vast hall for public business, from its cedar pillars, called the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It was 175 feet long, half that measurement in width, above fifty feet high; four rows of cedar columns supported a roof made of beams of the same wood; there were three rows of windows on each side facing each other. Besides this great hall, there were two others, called porches,

of smaller dimensions, in one of which the throne of justice was placed. The harem, or women's apartments, joined to these buildings; with other piles of vast extent for different purposes, particularly, if we may credit Josephus, a great banquetting hall. The same author informs us, that the whole was surrounded with spacious and luxuriant gardens, and adds a less credible fact, ornamented with sculptures and paintings. Another palace was built in a romantic part of the country for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt; in the luxurious gardens of which we may lay the scene of that poetical epithalamium, or collection of idyls, the Song of Solomon.

The descriptions in the Greek writers of the Persian courts in Susa and Ecbatana; the tales of the early travellers in the East about the kings of Samarcand or Cathay; and even the imagination of the oriental romancers and poets, have scarcely conceived a more splendid pageant than Solomon, seated on his throne of ivory, receiving the homage of distant princes who came to admire his magnificence, and put to the test his noted wisdom. This throne was of pure ivory, covered with gold; six steps led up to the seat, and on each side of the steps stood twelve lions. All the vessels of his palace were of pure gold, silver was thought too mean: his armoury was furnished with gold; 200 targets, and 300 shields of beaten gold were suspended in the house of Lebanon. Josephus mentions a body of archers who escorted him from the city to his country palace, clad in dresses of Tyrian purple, and their hair powdered with gold dust. But enormous as this wealth appears, the state-



ment of his expenditure on the temple, and of his annual revenue, so passes all credibility, that any attempt at forming a calculation on the uncertain data we possess, may at once be abandoned as a hopeless task. No better proof can be given of the uncertainty of our authorities, of our imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew weights of money, and, above all, of our total ignorance of the relative value which the precious metals bore to the commodities of life, than the estimate, made by Dr. Prideaux, of the treasures left by David, amounting to 800 millions, nearly the capital of our national debt.

Our inquiry into the sources of the vast wealth which Solomon undoubtedly possessed, may lead to more satisfactory, though still imperfect results. The treasures of David were accumulated rather by conquest than by traffic. Some of the nations he subdued, particularly the Edomites, were wealthy. All the tribes seem to have worn a great deal of gold and silver in their ornaments and their armour; their idols were often of gold, and the treasuries of their temples perhaps contained considerable wealth. But during the reign of Solomon almost the whole commerce of the world passed into his territories. The treaty with Tyre was of the utmost importance: nor is there any instance in which two neighbouring nations so clearly saw, and so steadily pursued, without jealousy or mistrust, their mutual and inseparable interests. On one occasion only, when Solomon presented to Hiram twenty inland cities which he had conquered, Hiram expressed great dissatisfaction, and called the territory by the opprobrious name of Cabul.

The Tyrian had perhaps cast a wistful eye on the noble bay and harbour of Acco, or Ptolemais, which the prudent Hebrew either would not, or could not—since it was part of the promised land—dissever from his dominions. So strict was the confederacy, that Tyre may be considered the port of Palestine, Palestine the granary of Tyre. Tyre furnished the ship-builders and mariners; the fruitful plains of Palestine victualled the fleets, and supplied the manufacturers and merchants of the Phœnician league with all the necessaries of life.

This league comprehended Tyre, Aradus, Sidon, perhaps Tripolis, Byblus and Berytus; the narrow slip of territory which belonged to these states was barren, rocky, and unproductive. The first branch of commerce into which this enterprizing people either admitted the Jews as regular partners, or at least permitted them to share its advantages, was the traffic of the Mediterranean. To every part of that sea the Phœnicians had pursued their discoveries; they had planted colonies, and worked the mines. This was the trade to Tarshish, so celebrated, that ships of Tarshish seem to have become the common name for large merchant vessels. Tarshish was probably a name as indefinite, as the West Indies in early European navigation; properly speaking, it was the south of Spain, then rich in mines of gold and silver, the Peru of Tyrian adventure. Whether or not as early as the days of Solomon,—without doubt in the more flourishing period of Phœnicia; before the city on the main land was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and insular Tyre became the emporium—the Phœnician navies extended their voyages beyond the

pillars of Hercules, where they founded Cadiz. Northward they sailed along the coast of France to the British isles: southward along the African shore; where the boundaries of their navigation are quite uncertain, yet probably extended to the Gold Coast. The second branch of commerce was the inland trade with Egypt. This was carried on entirely by the Jews. Egypt supplied horses in vast numbers, and linen yarn. The vallies of the Nile produced flax in abundance; and the yarn, according to the description of the prudent housewife in the Proverbs, was spun and woven by the females in Palestine. The third and more important branch, was the maritime trade by the Red Sea. The conquests of David had already made the Jews masters of the eastern branch of this gulf. Solomon built or improved the towns and ports of Elath and Ezion-geber. Hence a fleet, manned by Tyrians, sailed for Ophir, their East Indies, as Tarshish was their West. They coasted along the eastern shore of Africa, in some part of which the real Ophir was probably situated. When the Egyptians under Necho, after the declension of the Israelitish kingdom, took possession of this branch of commerce, there seems little reason to doubt the plain and consistent account of Herodotus, that the Tyrians sailed round the continent of Africa. The whole maritime traffic with eastern Asia, the southern shores of the Arabian peninsula, the coasts of the Persian gulf, and without doubt some parts of India, entered, in the same manner, the Red Sea, and was brought to Elath and Ezion-geber. Yet even this line of commerce was scarcely more

valuable than the inland trade of the Arabian peninsula. This was carried on by the caravans of the native tribes, who transported on camels the spices, incense, gold, precious stones, valuable woods, particularly the almug, thought to be the sandal, and all the other highly prized productions of that country; perhaps also the foreign commodities which were transported across the Persian gulf, or which were landed, by less adventurous traders from the east, in the Arabian ports on that sea. Both these lines of commerce flowed directly into the dominions of Solomon. Those goods which passed on to Tyre were, not improbably, shipped at Joppa. Two of the towns which Solomon built, Gezer and lower Beth-horon, were nearly on the line from the Red Sea to that haven. This traffic was afterwards recovered by the Edomites, under the protection, or sharing its advantages with the Egyptians; still, however, the Tyrians were most likely both the merchants who fitted out the enterprises, and the mariners who manned the ships. The goods intended for Tyre were then, most probably, shipped at Rhinocorura. Under the Romans the Nabathean Arabs carried on the same traffic, of which their great city, Petra, was the inland emporium; at least that by the caravans, for the Ptolemies had diverted great part of the Red Sea trade to their new port of Berenice. A fifth line of commerce was that of inland Asia which crossed from Assyria and Babylonia to Tyre. In order to secure and participate in this branch of traffic, Solomon subdued part of the Syrian tribes, and built two cities, as stations, between the

Euphrates and the coast. These were Tadmor and Baalath, one the celebrated Palmyra, the other Baal-bec. After the desolating conquests of Assyria, and the total ruin of old Tyre, this line of trade probably found its way to Sardis, and contributed to the splendour of Croesus and his Lydian kingdom. It was from these various sources of wealth that the precious metals and all other valuable commodities were in such abundance—that, in the figurative language of the sacred historian, *silver was in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar-trees as sycamores.*

Solomon was not less celebrated for his wisdom than his magnificence. The visits of the neighbouring princes, particularly that of the queen of Sheba, (a part of Arabia Felix,) were to admire the one as much as the other. Hebrew tradition, perhaps the superstitious wonder of his own age, ascribed to Solomon the highest skill in magical arts, and even unbounded dominion over all the invisible world. Tadmor, in the wilderness, was said to have been built by his enchantments. More sober history recognizes in Solomon the great poet, naturalist, and moral philosopher of his time. His poetry, consisting of 1005 songs, except his epithalamium, and perhaps some of the Psalms, has entirely perished. His natural history of plants and animals has suffered the same fate. But the greater part of the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (perhaps more properly reckoned as a poem) have preserved the conclusions of his moral wisdom.

The latter book, or poem, derives new interest, when considered as coming from the most volup-



tuous, magnificent, and instructed of monarchs, who sums up the estimate of human life in the melancholy sentence—*Vanity of vanities! vanity of vanities!* It is a sad commentary on the termination of the splendid life and reign of the great Hebrew sovereign. For even had not this desponding confession been extorted by the satiety of passion, and the weariness of a spirit, over-excited by all the gratifications this world can bestow—had no higher wisdom suggested this humiliating conclusion—the state of his own powerful kingdom, during his declining years, might have furnished a melancholy lesson on the instability of human grandeur. Solomon, in his old age, was about to bequeath to his heir an insecure throne, a discontented people, formidable enemies on the frontiers, and perhaps a contested succession. He could not even take refuge in the sanctuary of conscious innocence, and assume the dignity of suffering unmerited degradation; for he had set at defiance every principle of the Hebrew constitution. He had formed a connexion with Egypt—he had multiplied a great force of cavalry—he had accumulated gold and silver—he had married many foreign wives. His seraglio was on as vast a scale as the rest of his expenditure—he had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines. The influence of these women, not merely led him to permit an idolatrous worship within his dominions; but even Solomon had been so infatuated, as to consecrate to the obscene and barbarous deities of the neighbouring nations, a part of one of the hills which overlooked Jerusalem; a spot almost

fronting the splendid temple, which he himself had built to the one Almighty God of the universe. Hence clouds on all sides gathered about his declining day. Hadad, one of the blood-royal of the Edomite princes, began to organize a revolt in that province, on which so much of the Jewish commerce depended. An adventurer, Rezon, seized on Damascus, and set up an independent sovereignty, thus interrupting the communication from Tadmor. A domestic enemy, still more dangerous, appeared in the person of Jeroboam, a man of great valour, supported by the prophet Ahijah, who foretold his future rule over the ten tribes. Though forced to fly, Jeroboam found an asylum with Shishak, or Sesac, the Sesonchosis of Manetho, who was raising the kingdom of Egypt to its former alarming grandeur; and, notwithstanding his alliance with Solomon, made no scruple against harbouring his rebellious subject. Above all, the people were oppressed and dissatisfied; either because the enormous revenues of the kingdom were more than absorbed by the vast expenditure of the sovereign; or because the more productive branches of commerce were interrupted by the rebellions of the Edomites and Damascenes. At this period, likewise, Solomon departed from the national, though iniquitous policy of his earlier reign, during which he had laid all the burthens of labour and taxation on the strangers, and exempted the Israelites from every claim, but that of military service. The language held to Rehoboam, on his accession, shows that the people had suffered deeply from the arbitrary exactions

of the king, who, with the state and splendour, had assumed the despotism of an oriental monarch. Hence the decline of the Jewish kingdom, supported rather by the fame of its sovereign, than by its inherent strength, was as rapid as its rise. Solomon died after a reign of forty years, and with him expired the glory and the power of the Jewish empire.

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## BOOK VIII.

### KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

*Accession of Rehoboam—Jeroboam—Separation of the Two Kingdoms—Asa—House of Omri—Building of Samaria—Ahab—The Prophets—Elijah—Elisha—Jehoshaphat—Hostilities with Syria—House of Jehu—Athaliah—Uzziah—Hazael—Jeroboam the Second—Ahaz—Fall of Samaria—Captivity of the Ten Tribes—Hezekiah—Manasseh—Josiah—Assyrian Conquests—First—Final Capture of Jerusalem.*





## KINGS OF JUDAH.

## KINGS OF ISRAEL.

YRS.

YRS.

Rehoboam... reigned 17... B.C.979 = Jeroboam... reigned 22

Abijah..... 3... B.C.962.

Asa ..... 41 .B.C.959.

B.C.957.. Nadab ..... 2

B.C.955.. Baasha ..... 23

B.C.932.. Elah ..... 2

B.C.930.. Zimri, Omri ..... 11

B.C.919.. Ahab ..... 22

Jehoshaphat ..... 25... B.C.918.

B.C.897.. Ahaziah ..... 2

B.C.895.. Jehoram ..... 12

Jehoram ..... 8... B.C.893.

Ahaziah ..... 1... B.C.885.

Athaliah ..... 6... B.C.884.. Jehu ..... 28

Jehoash ..... 40... B.C.878.

B.C.855.. Jehoahaz..... 14

B.C.841.. Jehoash ..... 16

Amaziah ..... 29... B.C.838.

B.C.825.. Jeroboam 2d ..... 42

Uzziah or Azariah ..52.. B.C.809.

B.C.781.. Interregnum ..... 11

B.C.770.. Zachariah & Shallum 1

B.C.769.. Menahem ..... 10

B.C.759.. Pekahiah ..... 2

B.C.758.. Pekah ..... 20

Jotham ..... 16... B.C.757.

Ahaz ..... 16... B.C.741.

B.C.737.. 2nd Interregnum .... 9

B.C.728.. Hoshea ..... 9

Hezekiah ..... 29... B.C.726.

B.C.719.. Samaria taken.

Manasseh ..... 55... B.C.697.

Amon ..... 2... B.C.642.

Josiah ..... 31... B.C.640.

Jehoahaz.. 3 months — } B.C.609.

Jehoiachim ..... 11 } B.C.609.

Jehoiachin or Coniah,

3 months — } B.C.598.

Zedekiah ..... 11 }

Jerusalem destroyed..... B.C.587.

REHOBAM, the son of Solomon, was received as king by the whole nation. But his title, though recognized at Jerusalem, seemed insecure without the formal adhesion of the other tribes. An assembly, therefore, was summoned at Shechem; but instead of adopting the wise and conciliatory language recommended by the older counsellors of Solomon, Rehoboam followed the advice of the young and violent; and when the assembly, headed by the popular Jeroboam, who made his appearance from Egypt, demanded an alleviation of the public burthens, the rash and inconsiderate king, not merely refused compliance, but in the true character of Eastern monarchy, threatened them with still heavier exactions. "*My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.*" "*To your tents, O Israel,*" was the instantaneous cry; the ten tribes unanimously renounced their allegiance, raised Jeroboam to the throne, forced the son of Solomon to fly to his native kingdom of Judah, and stoned Adoram the collector of his tribute. Thus, the national union was for ever dissolved, and the Hebrew kingdom never recovered this fatal blow.

Rehoboam had recourse to arms, and raised an host of 180,000 men. But the authority of the prophet Shemaiah prevented the civil war, and Rehoboam was obliged to content himself with fortifying and securing his own dominions. In the mean time, the politic and unscrupulous Jeroboam pursued every measure which could make the breach irreparable, and thus secure his throne. As long as Jerusalem was the place of the national

worship, it might again become the centre of the national union. The Levitical class, who constantly went up to the temple in their courses, and the religion itself, were bonds which must be dissolved; a separate kingdom must have a separate priesthood, and a separate place and establishment for sacred purposes. To this end, Jeroboam caused two golden calves to be made, and consecrated some ignoble persons, not of the Levitical tribe, as the priesthood. These calves were set up, the one in the central position of Bethel, the other in the remote city of Dan. They were not, strictly speaking, idols, but were speciously contrived as symbolic representations, probably, preserving some resemblance to the cherubim, of which the ox was one of the four constituent parts. Still, they were set up in no less flagrant violation of the law, than if they had been the deities of Egypt, to which they bore a great likeness. This heinous deviation from the Mosaic polity was not carried into effect without remonstrance on the part of the prophets. As Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense, one of the seers made his appearance, denounced a curse, and foretold the disasters that would inevitably ensue. The king, attempting to seize him, his hand was suddenly withered, but restored at the prayer of the prophet. The prophet himself, not strictly complying with the divine command, was destroyed on his return home by a lion, an awful example to all those who should exercise that function, so important in the later period of the Jewish kingdom. But Jeroboam was not satisfied with thus securing his throne against the influence of the national re-

ligion. It may be assumed, that, not without his suggestion or connivance, his patron, Shishak,\* king of Egypt, made a descent on the kingdom of Judah, now weakened by the corrupt morals of the people. Rehoboam offered no effectual resistance to the invader: the treasures of the temple and palace of Solomon were plundered; the golden shields carried away, and replaced by others made of the baser metal, brass.

After a reign of seventeen years Rehoboam was succeeded on the throne of Judah by Abijah, his son, (B. C. 962,) who immediately raised a great force to subdue the kingdom of Israel. The armies of Abijah and Jeroboam met in Mount Ephraim. Jeroboam had on his side both numbers (800,000 men to 400,000) and military skill, which enabled him to surround the forces of Judah. But Abijah had the religious feelings of the people. The presence of the priesthood, and the sound of the sacred trumpets inspired Judah, as much as they disheartened Israel. Jeroboam was totally defeated with the loss of 500,000 men; the disaster preyed on his mind, and he never after recovered his power or enterprize.

After a short reign of three years Abijah died, and was succeeded by his son Asa, (B. C. 959,) a

\* M. Champollion has found at Karnack a sculpture, with the name of Shishonk, (Shishak,) represented dragging the chiefs of thirty nations before his gods. Among these is the figure of one with the Jewish character of form and countenance, and the inscription Joudaha Melek, king of the Jews: the names of the other Egyptian kings mentioned in the Hebrew Annals, Zerah the Ethiopian, Tirhakah, and So, have likewise been made out.

prudent and religious prince. He pursued the wiser policy of establishing the national religion in all its splendour and influence, encouraging those who came up to the feasts from the neighbouring kingdom, and checking idolatry, which he punished even in the person of Maachah, the queen-mother, whom he degraded and banished. Asa strengthened his army and fortified his cities, and thus was enabled to repel a most formidable invasion headed by Zerah the Ethiopian, some suppose an Arabian, or, more probably, either Osorchon, the king of Egypt, or his general, at the head of a million of men, and 300,000 chariots.

But while, from the sacred reverence in which the lineage of David and Solomon were held, the throne of Judah passed quietly from son to son, the race of Jeroboam, having no hereditary greatness in their favour, was speedily cut off from the succession, and adventurer after adventurer contested the kingdom of Israel. During the illness of his elder son, Abijah, Jeroboam had sent his wife, in disguise, to consult the prophet Ahijah upon his fate. The prophet not only predicted the death of this promising youth on the immediate return of his mother to the capital city of Tirzah, but also the total extermination of his race. At the death of Jeroboam the fatal prophecy immediately came to pass. Nadab, his son and successor (B.C. 957), was dethroned and put to death, and his whole lineage put to the sword by Baasha (B.C. 955), who filled the throne for twenty-four years. Baasha endeavoured to counteract the prudent policy of Asa, by building a city (Ramah) on the frontier, to intercept those



who deserted to the older kingdom and to the purer religion of Jerusalem. In the war that ensued, the King of Judah carried off the materials collected for building the city. Asa adopted a more unprecedented measure, a league with a foreign potentate, the king of Syria, against his Israelitish brethren; a league which he purchased by a considerable present, taken from the treasures of the temple. The zeal of the prophets took fire, and Hanani, in the name of God, remonstrated against the unnatural alliance. The house of Baasha, after his death, suffered the same fate with that of Jeroboam; his son, Elah, was overthrown by Zimri, Zimri in his turn by Omri; who, finally prevailing over another antagonist, Tibni, transferred the royal residence from Tirzah, a beautiful city, where Zimri had set fire to the royal palace, and burnt himself and all the treasures in the flames, to Samaria, so long the hated rival of Jerusalem.

The apostacy of the ten tribes, and the wickedness of their kings, did not reach their height till the accession of Ahab, the son of Omri (B.C. 919); this prince married Jezebel, the fierce and cruel daughter of the king of Sidon. Under her influence the Sidonian worship of Baal, the Sun, was introduced; his temples were openly built and consecrated; and this fierce and persecuting idolatry threatened to exterminate the ancient religion. The prophets were put to death; 100 escaped by lying concealed in a cave; yet these intrepid defenders of the God of their fathers still arose to remonstrate against these fatal innovations; till at length Elijah, the greatest of the

whole race, took up the contest, and defied and triumphed over the cruelty, both of the king and his blood-thirsty consort.

At this period the prophets act their most prominent and important part in Jewish history, particularly in that of Israel, where the Levites having been expelled, and the priesthood degraded, they remained the only defenders of the law and religion of the land. Prophecy, it has been observed before, in its more extensive meaning, comprehended the whole course of religious education; and as the Levitical class were the sole authorized conservators and interpreters of the law, the prophets were usually of that tribe, or at least persons educated under their care. Now, however, they assume a higher character, and appear as a separate and influential class in the state. They are no longer the musicians, poets, and historians of the country, but men full of a high and solemn enthusiasm, the moral and religious teachers of the people. The most eminent are described as directly, and sometimes suddenly, designated for their office by divine inspiration, endowed with the power of working miracles, and of foretelling future events. But, setting aside their divine commission, the prophets were the great constitutional patriots of the Jewish state; the champions of virtue, liberty, justice, and the strict observance of the civil and religious law, against the iniquities of the kings and of the people. In no instance do they fall beneath, often they rise above, the lofty and humane morals of the Mosaic Institutes. They are always on the side of the oppressed; they boldly rebuke, but never factiously insult,

their kings ; they defend, but never flatter the passions of the people. In no instance does one of the acknowledged seers, like the turbulent demagogues of the Grecian or Roman republics, abuse his popular influence for his own personal aggrandizement or authority. Sometimes the Hebrew prophets ventured beyond the borders of their own land, and were universally received with honour and with awe ; for, in fact, most of the eastern nations treat with reverence all pretensions to divine afflatus ; so as to respect even madness or idiotcy, as possibly partaking of that mysterious influence. Hence, the appearance of Elisha at Damascus, or even of Jonah at Nineveh, is by no means improbable. Nevertheless the exercise of the prophetic function was attended with the greatest danger, particularly in their native country. The Mosaic law, while it promised an uninterrupted line of prophets, provided by the enactment of the severest penalties, and by the establishment of a searching test, against the unwarranted assumption of the holy office. If the prophet's admonitions were not in accordance with the law, or if the event answered not to his predictions, he was to be put to death. Hence though false prophets might escape by dexterously flattering the powerful, the bold and honest discharge of the office demanded the highest zeal and intrepidity. Of all the prophets, none united such distinguished qualifications, or was so highly gifted, as Elijah, who appeared at this disastrous juncture, when the abrogation of the ancient religion, and the formal establishment of the Sidonian worship, were subtly and deliberately attempted. At his first appearance before Ahab,

Elijah denounced, as imminent and immediate, one of those penalties, with which, according to the first principles of the Mosaic law, the land was threatened on the desertion of the national worship, a long and distressing drought of many years. Having delivered his message, he concealed himself near a brook which ran into the Jordan; there he was fed, as some translate the word, by ravens, as others, by travelling merchants, or Arabians. At length the brook dried up, and Elijah fled into Sarepte, a town within the dominions of his Sidonian enemies. Here he was entertained by a charitable widow, whose services were rewarded by the miraculous repletion of her cruise of oil, and the restoration of her son to life. Still the drought continued; the fruitful plains and the luxuriant valleys of Ephraim and Zebulon lay parched and crumbling with heat; the fountains, the wells, the rivers, were all dried up; there was not herbage enough to feed the royal horses and cattle. At this juncture, Elijah suddenly appeared before the king, having previously sent him a message by the reluctant Obadiah. He demanded to put the truth of the two religions to the test of a public and splendid miracle. The scene took place on the summit of that lofty mountain, Carmel, which, on one side, commands a view of the boundless ocean, on the other, of the richest valleys of the promised land. The priests of Baal, the Sun, assembled to the number of 450; Elijah stood alone. All the people awaited the issue in anxious expectation. Whichever sacrifice was kindled by fire from heaven, was to decide the cause. The priests of Baal having selected their victim, placed it on the altar. As

their god began to arise above the eastern horizon, they hailed his appearance with the smoke of their incense, and the loud sound of their orisons. They continued their supplications till he reached the height of his noonday splendour ; then with frantic cries, wild dances, cutting their flesh with knives and lancets, they summoned their god to reveal his power. All above was mute and still, the altar cold and unkindled. Elijah began to taunt them. *Cry aloud (he said) for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* Still as the orb began to descend, they continued to chaunt their hymns, till at length it sank into the waves of the sea. Elijah then raised an altar of twelve stones, filled the trench around it with water, placed the victim upon it, and uttered a brief and simple prayer to the God of his fathers. Instantaneously the fire flashed down, and consumed both the sacrifice and the altar, and licked up the water in the trench. The people at once recognized the hand of God ; the law was put in force against the idolatrous priests, they were taken down and put to death on the banks of the Kishon. Immediately the curse was removed from the land : Elijah saw a small cloud, the usual forerunner of rain, arise as from the sea, and the whole country was refreshed by abundant showers. Elijah entered Jezreel with Ahab, but was soon obliged to fly from the vengeance of the queen ; he passed first to Beersheba, the southern extremity of Judah, then into the desert to Horeb, the scene of the delivery of the law. Here he received a divine commission to anoint a new king of Syria, Hazael ; a



new king of Israel, Jehu; a new prophet in his own place, Elisha. The circumstances of the divine communication are remarkable, as apparently designed to impress the mind with notions of the greatness and goodness, rather than of the terror and wrath of God. God appears neither in the earthquake nor the fire, but in the still small voice behind; *behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord, the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice.*

In the mean time the affairs of Israel, after the restoration of the ancient religion, had prospered. A great confederacy of the Syrian kings, headed by Benhadad, a name common to the kings of Damascus, after an insolent command of unconditional surrender, besieged Samaria. As the Syrian troops were negligently feasting in their camp, certain of the youth of high rank fell upon them, and discomfited them with great slaughter. The Syrians consoled themselves by the notion, that the God of Israel was the God of the Hills: on the plain their superior numbers, and immense force in chariots would regain their superiority. A second total defeat destroyed their confidence, though the Israelites were described as two little flocks of kids in comparison with their vast army. The fugitives took refuge in Aphek, and great numbers were crushed by the falling of the walls of that city. Benhadad and his leaders had no other course but to surrender. Ahab received

them honourably, spared their lives, on condition that all the conquests of the Syrians should be restored, and that the Israelites should have a quarter in the city of Damascus assigned for their residence. This unusual lenity, and the neglect to secure the inviolability of the Holy Land by the exemplary punishment of foreign invaders, roused the indignation of the prophets, one of whom appeared wounded, and with ashes on his head, and rebuked the king for this, according to the existing notions, most criminal weakness. The providential success of Ahab's arms neither reconciled him to the worship of the true God, nor taught him reverence for the institutes of his country. The law of property was still in full force; but a piece of land, occupied by a vineyard, lying conveniently near that of the king, he desired to purchase it. Naboth, the owner, refused to alienate the inheritance of his family. By the advice of his crafty queen, Ahab caused the unhappy man to be accused of blasphemy. Through the subornation of witnesses, and the corruption of the municipal court of judicature, he procured his condemnation: Naboth was stoned to death. The crime was no sooner committed than the king was startled with the sudden re-appearance of Elijah. He denounced divine vengeance, and proclaimed aloud that the dogs should lick the blood of Ahab as they had licked the blood of Naboth; that a fate as terrible awaited his queen, Jezebel, near the walls of Jezreel; and that his whole family should perish by a violent death.

All this time the kingdom of Judah had enjoyed an interval of peace and prosperity. After a reign

of forty-one years, Asa was succeeded (B. C. 918) by his son Jehoshaphat. The new king pursued the prudent and religious course of his father, fortified his kingdom, maintained a powerful army, established public teachers of the law, and organized the courts of judicature in all the cities of Judah. The kingdom was in a high state of prosperity; the Philistines and the Arab tribes paid tribute to the king of Jerusalem. By this time the bitter animosities, which arose out of the separation of the kingdoms, had subsided. Jehoshaphat entered into an alliance with the king of Israel; and, in an evil hour, he married his son Jehoram to the cruel and ambitious daughter of Ahab, Athaliah, who introduced the crimes and calamities of the Israelitish dynasty into the royal house of Judah. Ahab had determined to wrest the important town of Ramoth, in Gilead, from the power of the Syrians, and summoned his ally, Jehoshaphat, to his assistance. But before the expedition set forth, the prophets were to be consulted. Ahab had, however, taken a sure way of ridding himself of their importunate admonitions, by raising a prophetic fraternity in his own interests. The honest Micaiah, who alone foretold calamity and ruin, was insulted, and thrown into prison; and Ahab, persuaded by his own prophets, who were filled with lying spirits, went boldly out to the war. In the onset the troops of Syria avoided the king of Judah, and centered their whole attack against the person of the king of Israel. Ahab, shot through by a random arrow, was brought to Samaria, his armour and chariot were washed in the pool of

Samaria, where, according to the prediction of Elijah, the dogs licked his blood.

Jehoshaphat, on his return to his own kingdom, was threatened by a formidable confederacy of Ammonites, Moabites, and other predatory tribes, who appeared among the rich gardens of Engedi, west of the Dead Sea. But while the army of Judah remained motionless, engaged in their religious rites, and joining in their hymns of battle, some misunderstanding or dissension broke out among the troops of the enemy; the different tribes fell upon each other, and Judah had only to share the rich booty of the abandoned camp.

The alliance between the two Hebrew kingdoms lasted during the short and uneventful reign of Ahaziah (B.C. 891), the son and successor of Ahab. This prince, having met with an accident which endangered his life, sent to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whom perhaps the Philistines endowed with some of the powers of healing, attributed by the Greeks to Apollo. Elijah was commanded to rebuke this idolatrous disparagement of the God of Israel; twice, a troop of fifty men sent to seize him were struck with lightning; the third time he came boldly down from the hill on which he stood, and foretold the king's death, which almost immediately took place. Jehoram, his brother, ascended the throne. His first measure was the organization of a confederacy between the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, to chastise the revolted king of Moab, who had refused his accustomed tribute of 100,000 sheep and 100,000 lambs. Their united forces marched round the

foot of the Dead Sea, but found themselves bewildered in an arid desert without water. By the advice of Elisha, who had now assumed the prophetic office, they dug deep trenches along the plain, down which the waters from the mountainous district of Edom flowed rapidly and abundantly. The Moabites, in the morning, mistaking the waters, reddened by the rising sun, for pools of blood, supposed that the common fate of confederate armies had taken place, that they had quarrelled, and mutually slaughtered each other. They sallied down to plunder the camp, but meeting with unexpected resistance, were defeated on all sides; the king in his despair, after having in vain attempted to break through the hostile forces, and having seen his whole country cruelly devastated, offered his eldest son as a sacrifice to his gods. Yet he seems to have been saved from total ruin by some dissension among the allies, which led to the withdrawing of their forces.

On the death of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram succeeded, and thus we have a prince of the same name on each of the thrones, increasing the difficulty of relating the parallel history of the two kingdoms with perspicuity. In the first measure of Jehoram, king of Judah, the fatal consequences of the connexion with the sanguinary house of Ahab began to appear; all his brethren were put to death without remorse. The reign which began in blood, proceeded in idolatry and defeat, till the fearful doom, denounced in a letter sent by the prophet Elisha, was entirely fulfilled. The kingdom suffered a fatal blow in the revolt of Edom, and the loss of their remaining sea-port on the



Red Sea. Jehoshaphat had continued this commerce in conjunction with Ahaziah, king of Israel; he had fitted out a large fleet at Ezion-geber, which was wrecked on a ledge of rocks near that incommodious harbour. He then transferred his marine to Elath, and fitted out another expedition on his own account with better success. But Elath now also fell into the hands of the rebellious Edomites, and all commerce was entirely cut off. Nor was this the end of Jehoram's calamities; the Philistines and Arabians invaded the country, surprised his palace, captured his seraglio, and slew all his sons but one. Jehoram himself died of a painful and loathsome disease, so little honoured, that he was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings; Ahaziah his son succeeded.

We now return to the kingdom of Israel, where we find the king, Jehoram, engaged in a new war with his inveterate enemy, the Syrian king of Damascus. The hopes of the country rested on the prophet Elisha. Elijah had been wrapt to heaven in a car of fire, but had bequeathed his mantle, his office, and a double portion of his spirit, to his successor. This took place beyond the Jordan. Elisha, in possession of the miraculous mantle, divided the waters, and passed over; he was received and recognized by the prophetic school at Jericho, though originally an uneducated husbandman. The early period of his prophetic office is described as a succession of miracles; he purified the waters of Jericho, to which was attributed the singular property of causing women to miscarry: he laid his curse on forty-two youths in Bethel, who had mocked his bald head; they were

devoured by bears: he multiplied a widow's vessel of oil, and restored to life the child of an opulent woman in the town of Shunam: he destroyed the poisonous qualities of a mess of herbs, and fed 100 men with twenty loaves. He had contributed to gain the victory over the Moabites. His fame spread into Syria. Naaman, one of the great military leaders of that kingdom, was a leper. Elisha cured him by commanding him to wash in the Jordan; but to avoid the least suspicion of venality, he not merely refused all remuneration, but his servant, Gehazi, was punished by the same disease for fraudulently obtaining gifts, in his name, from the grateful stranger. As the Syrians pressed the war with greater vigour, their king, Benhadad, found all his measures anticipated; and attributed his want of success to the presence of Elisha. He sent an army to surprise him in the city of Dothan, at no great distance from Samaria. The troops were all smitten with blindness, conducted to Samaria, but released by the merciful intervention of the prophet.

But the city of Samaria was now environed on all sides, and endured the first of those dreadful sieges, by which the two capitals of the Jewish kingdoms appear, through some awful fatality, to have been distinguished beyond all the other cities of the world. The most loathsome food, an ass's head, and the dung of pigeons, were sold at enormous prices. Two women had made an agreement to kill their children for food, and one of them called upon the king to enforce her reluctant co-partner to fulfil her share in this horrible compact. The king rent his clothes, and was dis-

covered to have sackcloth next his skin. Jehoram, for some reason which does not appear, determined to wreak his vengeance on Elisha: when on a sudden the prophet announces the speedy discomfiture of the Syrian army, and unexampled abundance and cheapness of provisions. First, some lepers, desperate from their wretched condition, sally forth: they find the camp totally deserted. Wild noises of arms and chariots had been heard on all sides. The Syrians, supposing that the Egyptians, or some other powerful allies, had marched to the relief of Samaria, had been seized with a sudden panic, and dispersed. The greatest plenty, and an immense booty, rewarded the Samaritans for their dreadful sufferings. One of their officers, who had presumed to doubt the truth of Elisha's prophecies, according to his prediction, saw, but did not partake of the abundance; he was trampled to death in the press at the gate.

The prophetic fame of Elisha was now at its height: he entered the metropolis of the Syrians, where the king lay dangerously ill (as Josephus says) of a deep melancholy, occasioned by his defeat. He was met by Hazael, an eminent officer of the court, with a sumptuous present, borne on forty camels. *Will the king recover?* demands the Syrian. The prophet returns an enigmatical, yet significant answer, that the disease is not mortal, but that the monarch's end is approaching. With these words he burst into tears, for he knew that Hazael entertained designs against his master's life; and that the bold and unprincipled usurper would be a more formidable enemy to his native country, than had yet sat upon the throne of Syria.

The fatal prediction is accomplished in every point. Hazael smothers his master with a wet cloth; seizes the throne; and his first measure is a bloody battle at Ramoth, against the combined forces of both the Jewish kingdoms, under Jehoram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, who had just succeeded his father, Jehoram of Judah. In this calamitous field Jehoram was wounded, and retreated to Jezreel, where Ahaziah came to meet him. But the dynasty of the sanguinary Ahab was drawing to a close. Elisha commanded a young prophet to anoint Jehu, a valiant officer, as king of Israel. The army at Ramoth revolted, and espoused the cause of Jehu: he advanced rapidly in his chariot on Jezreel, for he was noted for his furious driving.

Jehoram and Ahaziah went forth from the city against Jehu: they met in the fatal vineyard of Naboth. Jehoram attempted to parley; but he was reproached with his own crimes and with the idolatries of his mother Jezebel. The king shrieked aloud, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah*, and fled. The bow of Jehu was strung; and the arrow pierced the unfortunate monarch through the heart. His body was taken up, and cast into the vineyard of Naboth. Ahaziah fled with no better fortune. He received a mortal wound, and died at Megiddo; his body was carried to Jerusalem. Jehu entered Jezreel in triumph. As he passed through the gate, the haughty Jezebel, *who had painted her face and tired her head*, looked forth from a window, and reproached him with the murder of the kings: *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?* Jehu lifted up his head, and exclaimed, *Who is on my side, who?* Some of the perfidious

eunuchs of the queen immediately appeared. *Throw her down*, was the stern command of Jehu. They obeyed: her blood fell upon the wall, and the horses trampled over her body; and when at length the unrelenting conqueror consented to permit her body to be buried, because *though a cursed woman, she was a king's daughter*, nothing but the miserable remains of her corpse were found, the scull, the feet, and the palms of the hands; for *the dogs* (according to the words of Elijah) *had eaten the flesh of Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel*. Thus, by the death of Jehoram and Ahaziah, both the thrones of Judah and Israel were vacant. Jehu hastened to secure the latter. There were seventy sons of Ahab in Samaria. Jehu sent to command the elders of the city, which was strongly fortified and well provided with arms, to set the best of Ahab's sons upon the throne. The elders apprehended that they might perform a more acceptable service: they made known their ready subservience to the views of the usurper. An indiscriminate slaughter of the seventy sons, of the friends and kindred of Ahab, took place: the heads were sent, in the modern Turkish fashion, to Jehu, at Jezreel. The subtle usurper ordered them to be placed by the gate; and addressed the assembled people, obliquely exculpating himself from the guilt of the massacre: *Behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?* He proceeded to attribute their death to the inscrutable decrees of the Almighty, who had determined on the extirpation of the whole guilty house of Ahab. The crafty Jehu continued his successful, though



bloody career. The house of Ahaziah met with no better fate than that of Ahab : Jehu put to death forty-two of them, whom he encountered on his way to Samaria. Obviously with a view to popularity, he entered Samaria with Jonadab, the son of Rechab, the founder of an austere ascetic sect, which abstained from the use of wine, seated by his side in his chariot. He concluded his dreadful work of vengeance by the total extermination of the priests of Baal, which he conducted with his usual subtlety. He avowed himself an ardent worshipper of that idolatry ; and summoned a general assembly of the priesthood. The temple was crowded : he commanded all the worshippers to put on splendid and distinguished apparel ; and ordered strict search to be made whether any of the worshippers of Jehovah were present. He then, having encircled the building with his guard, gave the signal for an unsparing massacre. Not one escaped : the idols were destroyed, the temples razed. Jonadab, the ascetic, countenanced and assisted this dreadful extirpation of idolatry. Yet even Jehu adhered to the symbolic worship established by Jeroboam.

Thus Israel was finally delivered from the fatal house of Ahab ; but Athaliah, the queen mother of Judah, showed herself a worthy descendant of that wicked stock, and scenes as bloody, and even more guilty, defiled the royal palace of Jerusalem. She seized the vacant throne, and massacred all the seed royal, excepting one child, Joash, who was secreted in the temple by his father's sister, Jehosheba, the wife of the high priest. Athaliah maintained her cruel and oppressive government

for six years, during which the temple was plundered, and the worship of Baal established. In the seventh a formidable conspiracy broke out, headed by the high priest.

As Athaliah entered the courts of the temple, she beheld the young and rightful heir of the kingdom, crowned, and encircled by a great military force, who, with the assembled priesthood, and the whole people, joined in the acclamation, "God save the King." She shrieked aloud, Treason, Treason! but her voice was drowned by the trumpets, and the cries of the multitude. Incapable of resistance, she was seized, dragged beyond the precincts of the temple, and put to death (B.C. 878). Jehoida, the high priest, who assumed the control of public affairs, the king being only seven years old, commanded Mattan, the priest of Baal, to be slain in his temple, and totally suppressed the religion.

The reign of Joash began under favourable auspices: the influence of the high priest, and the education of the king himself in the temple, promised the restoration of the national worship. Large contributions were made for the repair of the sacred edifice, which at first, it appears, were diverted by the priests to their own purposes. But a check having been devised to their fraudulent and irreligious proceedings, the fabric was restored in all its splendour, its services reorganized, and the sacred vessels, which had been profaned by Athaliah, replaced. But the peace of Judah, as well as of Israel, was threatened by the increasing power and ambition of Hazael, the ambitious and formidable usurper of the Syrian throne. During the latter part of the reign of Jehu, he had severed

from the kingdom of Israel all the Transjordanic provinces ; and during that of Jehoahaz, the successor of Jehu, reduced Samaria almost to a tributary province ; ten chariots, fifty horsemen, and 10,000 infantry were all the remaining force of that once powerful kingdom.

Hazael having taken Gath, now advanced against Jerusalem. The unwarlike Joash purchased his retreat at the price of all the sacred treasures of the temple ; and in every respect the latter part of the reign of Joash belied the promise of the former. After the death of the high priest Jehoiada, idolatry, which before, excepting the worship on high places, had been entirely suppressed, began to spread again among the higher ranks. Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, both as priest and prophet, resisted with the strongest denunciations the prevailing apostacy. The king, forgetful of his father's services, and the people, weary of his remonstrances, conspired together to stone him.

Defeat and death followed hard on the ingratitude and apostacy of Joash. The Syrians again appeared with a small force, but totally discomfited the Jewish army ; and his own officers revenged the disgrace of the nation on the person of the king, by murdering him in his bed. Nor was he thought worthy of a place in the sepulchres of the great kings of Judah.

The first act of Amaziah, the son and successor of Joash, was to do justice on the murderers of his father ; but with merciful conformity to the law, unusual in such times, he did not involve the children in the treason of their fathers.

Amaziah (B.C. 838) raised 300,000 men in Judah, and hired 100,000 from Israel, but the latter, by command of a prophet, he dismissed. With his own great army he invaded the revolted kingdom of Edom, gained a signal victory in the Valley of Salt, and took Selah (the rock), probably the important city of Petra. The Israelites whom he had sent back, surprised on their return some of the cities of Judah; and Amaziah, flushed with his conquests over Edom, sent a defiance to the king of Israel. Jehoash, who now filled that throne was a politic and successful prince; after the death of the formidable Hazael, he had reinstated his kingdom in its independence, and reconquered great part of his territory by three victories over the Syrians, which took place according to the prediction of the dying Elisha. Three times, according to the prophet's injunction, he had smote on the ground with certain arrows. Had he not paused, he had gained more than three victories. He treated the defiance of Amaziah with contempt. The two armies met at Bethshemesh: Judah was totally routed, Jerusalem pillaged, and the treasures of the temple carried away to Samaria. Fifteen years after the death of his rival, Amaziah, like his father, fell a victim to a conspiracy within the walls of his palace: he fled to Lachish, but was slain there.

In neither case was the succession altered; his son Azariah, or Uzziah, assumed the royal power, (B.C. 809,) and commenced a long, religious, and therefore prosperous, reign of fifty-two years. The great warlike enterprize of Azariah was the subjugation of the Philistines, and others of the

adjacent tribes : but his more important conquest was the recovery of Elath, the port on the Red Sea. Azariah provided with equal success for the internal prosperity of the country by the encouragement and protection of husbandry. He kept on foot a powerful army, strongly fortified Jerusalem, and endeavoured to make himself master of all the improvements in armour, and in the means of defending walled towns, then in use.

But this good and prudent king was guilty of one great violation of the law ; he began to usurp the office of the priests, and to offer incense. While he was offering, he was suddenly struck with leprosy ; and in rigid conformity to the law of Moses, he was set aside, and the administration of public affairs entrusted to his son Jotham. The kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim as it is now often called, regained a high degree of prosperity during the early period of Azariah's reign in Judah. Jeroboam the second, an able prince, had succeeded Jehoash (B.C. 825), and pursuing his father's successes, re-established the whole frontier from Hamath to the Dead Sea ; even Damascus, the Syrian capital, surrendered to his forces. But the kingdom, which was to remain in the line of Jehu to the fourth generation, at the death of Jeroboam fell into a frightful state of anarchy. At length, after eleven years of tumult (B.C. 770), his son Zachariah obtained the sceptre, but was speedily put to death by Shallum ; Shallum in his turn by Menahem. Menahem, (B.C. 769,) a sanguinary prince, reigned ten years ; during which the fatal power of the great Assyrian empire was advancing with gigantic strides to uni-



versal conquest. Pul, the monarch, who ruled at Nineveh, was rapidly extending his conquests over Syria, and began to threaten the independence of Israel. Menahem only delayed the final servitude by submission and tribute, which he wrung from his people by heavy exactions. Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, (B.C. 758,) who, in ten years after, was put to death by a new usurper, Pekah, the son of Remaliah. In the second year of Pekah began the reign of Jotham, (B.C. 757,) who took the reins of government during the lifetime of his father. Jotham strengthened the kingdom of Judah, made the Ammonites tributary, and, after an able, but not very eventful reign, left the throne to his son Ahaz, the worst and most unfortunate monarch who had ruled in Judah.

As the storm darkened over the Hebrew kingdom, the voices of the prophets became louder and more wild; those, whose writings have been preserved in our sacred volume, now come upon the scene. In their magnificent lyric odes, we have a poetical history of these momentous times, not merely describing the fall of the two Hebrew nations, but that of the adjacent kingdoms likewise. As each independent tribe or monarchy was swallowed up in the great universal empire of Assyria, the seers of Judah watched the progress of the invader; and uttered their sublime funeral anthems over the greatness, the prosperity, and independence of Moab, and Ammon, Damascus, and Tyre. They were like the great tragic chorus to the awful drama, which was unfolding itself in the eastern world. Nor did they confine

their views to their own internal affairs, or to their own immediate neighbourhood. Jonah appeared as a man under divine influence in Nineveh; and Nahum described the subsequent fate of that spacious city in images, which human imagination or human language have never surpassed.

Still, in general, the poets of Judæa were pre-eminently national. It is on the existing state, the impending dangers, and future prospects of Ephraim and Judah, that they usually dwell. As moral teachers, they struggle with the noblest energy against the corruptions which prevailed in all ranks and classes. Each kingdom had its prophets; in that of Israel, the obscure and sententious Hosea reprov'd the total depravation. The rustic and honest Amos inveighed against the oppressions of the wealthy, and the corruptions of the judges. In Judah, Joel described the successive calamities which desolated the country. But Isaiah not only took a great share in all the affairs of the successive reigns from Azariah to Hezekiah—described or anticipated all the wars, conquests, and convulsions, which attended the rise and fall of the Assyrian and Babylonian dynasties—but penetrated still farther into futurity. To Isaiah may be traced the first clear and distinct intimations of the important influence to be exercised by the Jews on the destiny of mankind—the promise of the Messiah, and the remote prospects of future grandeur, which tended so strongly to form their national character, and are still the indissoluble bond which has held together this extraordinary people through centuries of dispersion, persecution, and contempt. Still blind to

the fulfilment of all these predictions in the person and spiritual kingdom of Christ, the Jew, in every age and every quarter of the world, dwells on the pages of his great national prophet, and with undying hope looks forward to the long-delayed coming of the Deliverer, and to his own restoration to the promised land in splendour and prosperity, far surpassing that of his most favoured ancestors.

The dissensions between the two kingdoms led to their more immediate ruin. Ahaz succeeded to the throne of Judah in the seventeenth year of Pekah, (B. C. 741,) the last able or powerful monarch of Israel. Pekah entered into a confederacy with Rezin, king of Damascus, to invade Judæa. Their first expedition did not meet with much success ; a second descent was more fatal. On the retreat of the Syrians, Ahaz ventured on a battle. In this bloody field Judah lost 120,000 men ; Zichri, a valiant chieftain of the Israelites, slew with his own hand Maaseiah, the king's son, and some of his household. Two hundred thousand men, women, and children, were led away into captivity. The sight of their brethren in this miserable condition aroused the better feelings of the Israelites : they refused to retain them in servitude ; forced the army into milder measures ; treated the prisoners with great kindness ; gave them food, raiment, and the means of returning home—a beautiful and refreshing incident in this gloomy and savage part of their annals ; and, as usual, to be ascribed to one of their prophets. Rezin, in the mean time, the ally of Pekah, seized Elath. The Edomites and Philistines re-

volted ; and Ahaz, attacked on all sides, in his desperation threw himself under the protection of Tiglath Pileser, the Assyrian king, who had already subdued all the Transjordanic tribes, and advanced his frontier to the banks of the river. This treaty led to the usual results, where a weaker state enters into an alliance with a stronger. The Assyrian lent his aid as far as suited his own views of conquest ; invaded Syria, took Damascus, led the people away captive, and slew the king. But against the more immediate enemies of Ahaz, the Edomites, he sent no succours, and exhausted the kingdom of Judah by the exaction of a heavy tribute. It was not from want of base subservience to his protector, that Ahaz suffered this ungenerous treatment. Ahaz revolted entirely from the national faith ; he offered public worship to the gods of Syria ; constructed a new altar on the model of the one he saw at Damascus, where he went to pay homage to the Assyrian ; and robbed the treasury to pay his tribute. He defaced many of the vessels and buildings of the temple. No superstition was too cruel for Ahaz ; he offered incense in the valley of Hinnom, and made his children pass through the fire. In short, had not his death relieved his people, Jerusalem seemed rapidly following the example, and hastening towards the fate of Samaria. For now the end of that kingdom drew on. The unprincipled, though able Pekah, was assassinated ; another period of anarchy lasted for several years, till at length the sceptre fell into the feeble hands of Hoshea, who had instigated the murder of Pekah. A new and still more ambitious monarch, Shalmaneser, now

wielded the power of Assyria ; Hoshea attempted to avert the final subjugation of his kingdom by the payment of tribute, but being detected in a secret correspondence with the king of Egypt, called So, the Sevechus of Manetho, the Assyrian advanced into the kingdom, besieged Samaria, which, after an obstinate resistance of three years, surrendered, and thus terminated for ever the independent kingdom of Israel or Ephraim.

It was the policy of the Assyrian monarchs to transplant the inhabitants of the conquered provinces on their borders, to the inland districts of their empire. Thus they occupied their outposts with those on whose fidelity they might rely ; and with far wiser and more generous views, by introducing agricultural colonies among the ruder and nomadic hordes, as the Russians have done in their vast dominions, carried culture and civilization into wild and savage districts. Pul and Tiglath Pileser had already swept away a great part of the population from Syria, and the Transjordanic tribes ; and Shalmaneser, after the capture of Samaria, carried off vast numbers of the remaining tribes to a mountainous region between Assyria and Media, who were afterwards replaced there by colonies of a race called Cuthæans. From this period, history loses sight of the ten tribes as a distinct people. Prideaux supposes that they were totally lost and absorbed in the nations among whom they settled ; but imagination has loved to follow them into remote and inaccessible regions, where it is supposed that they still await the final restoration of the twelve tribes to their native land ; or it has traced the



Jewish features, language, and religion, in different tribes, particularly the Afghans of India, and in a still wilder spirit of romance, in the Americans. How far the descendants of the Israelites constituted the mingled people of the Samaritans, whose history has come down to us only as it is coloured by irreconcilable Jewish hostility, is a question hereafter to be discussed.

While the kingdom of Israel was rarely blessed by a permanent, vigorous, and prudent administration, and frequently endured all the evils of a contested and irregular succession, which placed adventurer after adventurer, or short and precarious dynasties upon the throne : while the best of their kings only so far returned to the national faith as to extirpate foreign idolatry, but remained true to the separate, symbolic, and forbidden worship of Jeroboam—the hereditary succession of Judah remained unbroken in the line of David, and a period of misrule and irreligion was almost invariably succeeded by a return to the national faith. Accordingly, six years before the final destruction of Samaria, one of the best and wisest of her kings, Hezekiah, replaced his father Ahaz on the throne of Judah (B.C. 726). Hezekiah carried the reformation much further than his most religious predecessors. The temple was cleansed—the rites restored with more than usual solemnity—the priesthood and Levites reinstated in their privileges—every vestige of idolatrous superstition eradicated—the shrines of false gods demolished—the groves levelled—the high places desecrated ; even the brazen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness, having been abused to superstitious

purposes, was destroyed. Having thus prepared the way, Hezekiah began still further to develope his plans, which tended to the consolidation of the whole Hebrew race under their old religious constitution. He determined to celebrate the pass-over (that which was called the second passover) with all its original splendour and concourse of people. He sent messengers into the neighbouring kingdom of Israel, to summon the ten tribes, then under the feeble rule of Hoshea. The proud Ephraimites treated his message with contempt; but from the smaller tribes multitudes flocked to Jerusalem, where the sacrifices were offered with something like the ancient state and magnificence. On their return, the religious zeal of those who had visited Jerusalem had great effect on their kindred; idolatry was put down by force, the temples and altars destroyed. How far, if the Jewish constitution had existed in its original vigour, and the whole of Palestine remained one great consolidated kingdom, it could have offered an effectual resistance to the vast monarchies which now began to spread the shadow of their despotism over the East—how far the kingdom of David and Solomon might have held the balance between the rival empires of Egypt and Assyria, in whose collision it was finally crushed—must be matter of speculation. But from this fatal period, Palestine was too often the debateable ground, on which rival kingdoms or empires fought out their quarrels. On this arena, not only the monarchs of Nineveh and Babylon, and the ancient Egyptian sovereigns, but subsequently also the Ptolemaic and Syro-Grecian dynasties, the Romans and

Parthians—we may add the Christian and Mahometan powers during the crusades—strove either for ascendancy over the eastern world or for universal dominion. The wise policy of Hezekiah, if his views led to the union of the kingdoms, came too late. He himself threw off the yoke of Assyria, and gained important advantages over the Philistines. But divine Providence had ordained the fall of Israel, and after the capture of Samaria, Jerusalem might tremble at the approach of the victor. Shalmaneser, however, was allured by the more tempting conquest of opulent Tyre. The princely merchants of that city resisted vigorously a siege of five years; though their aqueducts were broken, and the population reduced to great distress. The besieged were at length relieved by the death of the invader. The hereditary power and ambition of his conquering ancestors descended into the vigorous hand of Sennacherib. An immense army made its appearance in Judæa, and sat down before Lachish. The dismay can scarcely be conceived with which, after the total destruction of the sister kingdom by these irresistible invaders, and the transplantation of the people to distant regions, the inhabitants of Jerusalem expected the approach of the hostile forces to the walls. There is a passage in the book of Isaiah descriptive of their terrors, most probably, on this occasion: *What aileth thee now that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops; thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: . . . . . for it is a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down*

*the walls, and of crying to the mountains. And Elam bare the quiver, and Kir uncovered the shield. And it shall come to pass that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array in the gates.\** The prophet goes on to describe the preparations for defence made by Hezekiah, who strengthened the walls, added to the fortifications, laid in great store of arrows and other ammunition, deepened the trenches, and cut off all the waters which might have supplied the besieging army. The wilder and voluptuous desperation of others, is, if possible, more striking. It reminds us of the frantic revelry among the Athenians, during the time of the plague, described by Thucydides. *And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sack-cloth: but behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* The submission of Hezekiah, and the payment of an enormous tribute, for which he was obliged to strip the gold from the walls and pillars of the temple, for the present, averted the storm; and Sennacherib marched onward to a much more important conquest, that of the great and flourishing kingdom of Egypt. His general, Tartan, had already taken Azotus, and Sennacherib, in person, formed the siege of Libnah, or Pelusium, the key of that country. But he left behind him a considerable force under Tartan, Rabсарis, and Rabshakeh, who advanced to the walls of Jerusalem,

\* Isaiah xxiii. 1.

and made a demand of unconditional surrender. Hezekiah sent three of the chief officers of his palace to negotiate. Rabshakeh, as Prideaux conjectures, an apostate Jew, or one of the captivity, delivered his insulting summons in the Hebrew language, with the view of terrifying the people with the menace of total destruction. He contemptuously taunted them with their confidence in their God. *Hath any of the Gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria. Where are the Gods of Hamath and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?* The people listened in silence. The king clothed himself in sackcloth, and with his whole court and the priesthood, made a procession to the temple, in that sad and humiliating attire. But Isaiah encouraged them in their defiance of the enemy, and Rabshakeh, marched away to the army before Pelusium. This city made a most vigorous resistance; and Sennacherib received intelligence of the march of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, (no doubt Taraco, a king of Egypt, who appears in the Ethiopian dynasty of Manetho,) to relieve this important post. The conquest of Judæa, and the surrender of Jerusalem, became almost necessary to his success. He sent a second summons by letter, more threatening and peremptory than the former, describing the nations who, notwithstanding the vaunted assistance of their gods, had fallen before the power of Assyria. Hezekiah again had recourse to the temple, and in a prayer, unequalled for simple sublimity, cast himself on the



protection of the God of his fathers. Isaiah, at the same time, proclaimed, that the Virgin of Sion might laugh to scorn the menaces of the invader. The agony of suspense and terror, which prevailed in Jerusalem, was speedily relieved by the surprising intelligence that the army of Sennacherib had experienced a fatal reverse, that all which survived had dispersed, and that the monarch himself had fled to his capital, where he was slain by his own sons, while offering public sacrifice. The destruction of Sennacherib's army is generally supposed to have been caused by the Simoom,\* or hot and pestilential wind of the desert, which is said not unfrequently to have been fatal to whole caravans. The Arabs, who are well experienced in the signs which portend its approach, fall on their faces, and escape its mortal influence. But the foreign forces of Sennacherib were little acquainted with the means of avoiding this unusual enemy, and the catastrophe taking place by night, (the miraculous part of the transaction, as the hot wind is in general attributed to the heat of the meridian sun,) suffered immense loss. Herodotus relates a strange story of this ruin of Sennacherib's army: A number of field mice gnawed asunder their quivers, their bow-strings, and shield-straps: upon which the army took flight. As Herodotus derived this from the misinterpretation of an hieroglyphic, in which the shield, the quiver, and the bow, the usual symbols

\* After all that has been written in prose and verse about the Simoom, Burckhardt has called into question its fatal effects; he could never hear of an instance of its having caused death.

by which, as in Hebrew poetry, the might of a great army is represented, were destroyed by some secret and unseen or insignificant instrument of the divine power, typified by the field mouse?\*

At the latter end of the same year, the fourteenth of his reign, Hezekiah fell dangerously ill. His earnest prayer for the prolongation of his life, was accepted at the throne of mercy. Isaiah foretold his recovery, and the grant of fifteen years of life, and likewise of children; for the good king was leaving the kingdom without a legitimate heir. The prophet directed the means of his cure, by laying a plaster of figs on the boil from which he suffered; and proved his divine mission by the sign of the shadow retrograding ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. On this sign, and on the dial, volumes have been written. It is not necessary to suppose that the sun actually receded, but that the shadow on the dial did; a phenomenon which might be caused by a cloud refracting the light. Whether the Jews possessed sufficient astronomical science to frame an accurate dial, can neither be proved or disproved; still less the more rude or artificial construction of the instrument itself; for as the dial was probably set up by Ahaz, who was tributary to the Assyrians, it might have come originally from Chaldea. Immediately, indeed, after this event, Hezekiah received an embassy from Mero-dach Baladan, the independent king of Babylon, for the ostensible purpose of congratulating him on his recovery; some suppose, for that of in-

\* According to Horapollon, total destruction was represented, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, by the symbol of a mouse.

quiring into the extraordinary astronomical phenomenon, the intelligence of which had reached that seat of oriental science ; but more probably with the view of concerting measures for an extensive revolt from the Assyrian yoke. Hezekiah made a pompous display of his treasures, very likely much enriched by the plunder of Sennacherib's broken army. For this indiscreet ostentation, so calculated to excite the cupidity of a foreign invader, the king was reproved by the more prudent Isaiah. Internal convulsions in the kingdom of Assyria permitted Hezekiah to pass the rest of his reign in peace and opulence. His public treasury was full ; the husbandry and pasturage of the country returned to their former productiveness. He strengthened the cities, ornamented Jerusalem with a new aqueduct, and at length went down to the grave, honoured and regretted by the whole people. He was succeeded by Manasseh, a king, to whose crimes and irreligion, the Jews mainly attribute the dreadful evils which shortly after consigned them to ruin and slavery.

Manasseh ascended the throne at the age of twelve : the administration fell into the hands of unworthy ministers, of whom Shebna is represented by Isaiah, as the most haughty and violent. But with his years, the evil dispositions of the king came to maturity. Idolatry was restored ; every kind of superstition, witchcraft, and divination practised ; altars to idols were raised even within the sacred precincts ; the temple itself was defiled by a graven image. The irreligion of Manasseh was only equalled by his tyranny. The

city ran with innocent blood ; the sacred persons of the prophets were violated. Tradition ascribes the horrid martyrdom of Isaiah, who was sawn asunder, to this relentless tyrant. His vices brought their own punishment in the contemptible weakness to which the state was reduced. When the army of Esarhaddon, the new sovereign of Assyria, made its appearance under the walls, Jerusalem offered no resistance, and the unworthy heir of David and Solomon was led away to learn wisdom and piety in the dungeons of Babylon. Esarhaddon completed the plan of colonization commenced by his predecessors, and established bodies of his own subjects in the desolated provinces of Israel. So frightful had been the ravages inflicted on these beautiful and luxuriant plains, that the new colonists found themselves in danger from beasts of prey. The strangers had brought their own religious rites with them. The Babylonians had set up the pavilions of Benoth: the Cuthites, the settlers from Hamath, the Avites, and the Sepharvites, had each their separate divinity. They trembled before the lions which infested their territory; and looked on them not only with terror, but with religious awe, as manifest instruments of divine wrath. The remaining Israelites, no doubt, proclaimed that they were sent by their God; and the strangers, in the true spirit of polytheism, recognized the anger of the local deity, whom they supposed offended by the intrusion of their national gods into his territory. They appealed in haste to Esarhaddon, by whose command an Israelitish priest was sent to propitiate the God of the land, whom they

readily admitted to a participation in divine honours with their native deities ; and thus, a mingled worship of idolatry and true religion grew up in these provinces.

The lessons of adversity were not lost on Manasseh : he was restored to his throne, and the end of his long reign of fifty-five years, passed in the observance of law and religion, in some degree compensated for the vices of his youth. His son Amon, who succeeded, following the early career of his father, fell a victim to a conspiracy among his own officers.

At the age of eight years (B.C. 640) Josiah came to the throne. The memory of this prince is as deservedly dear to the Jews, as that of Manasseh is hateful. Josiah surpassed even his most religious predecessors, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Azariah, or Hezekiah, in zeal for the reformation of the national religion. His first care was to repair the temple. While the work was proceeding, the king and the whole nation heard with the highest exultation, that Hilkiah, the high priest, had discovered the original copy of the law. But so little were its real contents known, that on its first reading, the king was struck with terror at its awful denunciations. The book was read in public ; Josiah and all the nation renewed the solemn covenant with their God. The king proceeded to carry into execution the divine precepts of the law. He began by the total extirpation of idolatry, not merely in Judæa, but throughout all the holy land. The vessels of the temple, which had been abused to unhallowed uses, were burned to ashes ; all the high places levelled—the worship of the host of



heaven suppressed—the filthy and sanguinary rites of the Sodomites and worshippers of Moloch forbidden—the sacred places defiled. The horses dedicated to the sun—the altars which Ahaz had built on the top of the royal palace—the high places which Solomon had consecrated to the deities of his foreign wives—the altar raised by Jeroboam at Bethel—were not merely destroyed, but defiled with that from which Jewish feelings revolted with horror, as the foulest contamination, the ashes and the bones of dead men. The authority of Josiah was acknowledged, and his orders fulfilled to the most remote part of Palestine; an apparent proof that, notwithstanding the numbers that had been carried away into the foreign colonies, the ten tribes were not so entirely exterminated, but that their descendants, at least of the lower orders, were still the predominant population of the country. Josiah completed his reform by the celebration of the great national festival, the passover, on a scale of grandeur and magnificence unknown to the later ages of the Jewish kingdom. Yet the virtues of Josiah delayed only for a time the fate of Jerusalem. The hopes of reuniting the dominions of David and Solomon into one powerful kingdom, animated with lofty religious zeal, and flourishing under the wise and beneficent constitution of Moses, were cut short, so Divine Providence ordained, by the unfavourable circumstances of the times, and the death of the wise and virtuous king. A monarch of great power and abilities, Necho, was now the Pharaoh of Egypt. He determined to act on the offensive against the rival empire of Assyria, at this time, probably,

weakened by internal dissensions among the different kingdoms of which it was composed. His design was to gain possession of Carchemish, a city which commanded the passage of the Euphrates, and to make that river his frontier. Josiah was bound to the Assyrian interest by the terms of his vassalage, by treaty, by gratitude for the permission to extend his sovereignty over Samaria. From one, or all of these motives, or from a desire of maintaining his own independence, instead of allowing free passage to the army of Necho, he determined on resistance. A battle took place, in which Josiah was unfortunately shot by an arrow. On the scene of the battle it is difficult to decide. The sacred writers place it at Megiddo, in the district of Manasseh, to reach which the Egyptian army must have passed through the whole of Judæa, and almost under the walls of Jerusalem. Herodotus, with greater local probability, fixes the scene of action at Magdolum, on the frontier of Egypt—Josephus at Mendes. The Jewish copyists may have substituted the more familiar name, Megiddo, for the remote Magdolum.

At this period of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, appeared the prophet Jeremiah, a poet, from his exquisitely pathetic powers, admirably calculated to perform the funeral obsequies over the last of her kings, over the captive people, the desolate city, the ruined temple. The prophet himself, in the eventful course of his melancholy and persecuted life, learnt that personal familiarity with affliction, which added new energy to his lamentations over his country and his religion. To our great loss, his elegy on the death of

Josiah, in which the nation joined with heartfelt anguish, is not now extant among his prophecies: Necho, after his victory over the Assyrians, and the capture of Carchemish, took possession of Jerusalem, where, by a hasty choice, Jehoahaz, a younger son of Josiah, had been raised to the throne. The capture of the city under the name of Kadutis (the holy city) is related by Herodotus. In the celebrated royal tomb, discovered by Belzoni, in the valley of Beban el Malook, near Thebes, the name of Necho was thought to be distinctly decyphered.\* A painting on the same walls, exhibited a procession of captives, some of whom, from their physiognomy and complexion, were clearly distinguished as Jews. The conqueror deposed and imprisoned Jehoahaz, after a reign of three months; exacted a heavy fine from the kingdom, and placed Eliakim (Jehoiakim) on the throne. From this period the kingdom of Judæa fell into a state of alternate vassalage to the two conflicting powers of Egypt and Assyria. The shadows of kings, who were raised to the throne, were dismissed at the breath of their liege lord. It is a deplorable period of misrule and imbecility. Without ability to defend them, these unhappy kings had only the power of entailing all the miseries of siege and conquest on their people, by rebellions which had none of the dignity, while they had all the melancholy consequences of a desperate struggle for independence.

\* A strong objection has been raised to this supposition; Necho was of the Saitic dynasty of kings; and Herodotus clearly asserts that the burial place of that whole race was in Lower Egypt. The tomb was certainly not that of Necho.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (B. C. 604) the mightiest monarch who had wielded the Assyrian power; Nebuchadnezzar, was associated in the empire with his father, and assumed the command of the armies of Nineveh. The prophetic eye of Jeremiah foresaw the approaching tempest, and endeavoured to avert it by the only means which remained, in the impoverished and enfeebled state of the kingdom, timely submission. Long had he struggled, but in vain, to restore the strength of the state by the reformation and religious union of the king and the people. In the royal palace and in the temple, he had uttered his solemn warnings. His honest zeal had offended the priesthood. He had been arraigned as a false prophet before the royal council, where, by the intervention of powerful friends, he had been acquitted. Uriah, another prophet, who had boldly exercised that unwelcome office, after having fled in vain to Egypt, had been seized and put to death. At this juncture, Jeremiah again came forward. In opposition to a strong Egyptian faction, he urged the impracticability of resistance to the Assyrian forces, already on their march. But he spoke to deaf and heedless ears. He then denounced an impending servitude of the whole people, which was to last for seventy years, and to give further publicity to his awful remonstrances, he commanded Baruch, a scribe, to write on a roll the whole of his predictions. The roll was read, during a general fast, in the most public place, before the gate of the temple. The chief nobility of the city were strongly affected, but the headstrong king cut the roll to pieces, cast it into the fire, and Jeremiah and Baruch were obliged

to conceal themselves from his vengeance. The event soon justified the wisdom of the prophet. Nebuchadnezzar, having retaken Carchemish (B.C. 601,) passed the Euphrates, and rapidly overran the whole of Syria and Palestine. Jerusalem made little resistance. The king was put in chains to be carried as a prisoner to Babylon. On his submission, he was reinstated on the throne, but the temple was plundered of many of its treasures, and a number of well-born youths, among whom were Daniel, and three others, best known by their Persian names, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. From this date commence the seventy years of the captivity. Jehoiakim had learned neither wisdom nor moderation from his misfortunes. Three years after, he attempted to throw off the yoke of Assyria. Nebuchadnezzar, occupied with more important affairs, left the subjugation of Palestine to the neighbouring tribes, who, for three years longer, ravaged the whole country, shut up Jehoiakim in Jerusalem; and at length this weak and cruel king was slain (B.C. 598), perhaps in some sally. His unhonoured remains were buried, "with the burial of an ass."

Jehoiachin (Jeconias or Coniah), his son, had scarcely mounted the throne, when Nebuchadnezzar himself appeared at the gates of Jerusalem. The city surrendered at discretion. The king and all the royal family, the remaining treasures of the temple, the strength of the army and the nobility, and all the more useful artisans, were carried away to Babylon. Over this wreck of a kingdom, Zedekiah (Mattaniah), the younger son of Josiah, was permitted to enjoy an inglorious and precarious



sovereignty of eleven years, during which he abused his powers, even worse than his imbecile predecessors. In his ninth year, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the wise Jeremiah, he endeavoured to assert his independence; and Jerusalem, though besieged by Nebuchadnezzar in person, now made some resistance. The Egyptian faction in the city were encouraged by the advance of Hophra (Apries), the reigning Pharaoh, into Palestine. This march suspended for a time the operations of the Assyrians. The Jews, released from the pressing danger, recanted all the vows of reformation which they had begun to make. But Hophra and the Egyptian army were defeated; and the toils closed again around the devoted city. Jeremiah, undaunted by his ill-success, still boldly remonstrated against the madness of resistance. He was thrown into a foul and noisome dungeon, on an accusation of treasonable correspondence with the enemy. At length famine reduced the fatal obstinacy of despair. Jerusalem opened its gates to the irresistible conqueror. The king, in an attempt to break through the besieging forces, was seized, his children slain before his face, his eyes put out, and thus the last king of the royal house of David, blind and childless, was led away into a foreign prison. The capture of Jerusalem took place on the ninth day of the fourth month: on the seventh day of the fifth month (two days on which Hebrew devotion still commemorates the desolation of the city by solemn fast and humiliation) the relentless Nabuzaradan executed the orders of his master, by levelling the city, the palaces, and the temple, in one common ruin.

The few remaining treasures, particularly the two brazen pillars which stood before the temple, were sent to Babylon; the chief priests were put to death, the rest carried into captivity.

Jeremiah survived to behold the sad accomplishment of all his darkest predictions. He witnessed all the horrors of the famine, and, when that had done its work, the triumph of the enemy. He saw the strong holds of the city cast down; the palace of Solomon, the temple of God, with all its courts, its roofs of cedar and of gold, levelled to the earth, or committed to the flames; the sacred vessels, the ark of the covenant itself, with the cherubim, pillaged by profane hands. What were the feelings of a patriotic and religious Jew at this tremendous crisis, he has left on record in his unrivalled elegies. Never did city suffer a more miserable fate, never was ruined city lamented in language so exquisitely pathetic. Jerusalem is, as it were, personified, and bewailed with the passionate sorrow of private and domestic attachment: while the more general pictures of the famine, the common misery of every rank, and age, and sex, all the desolation, the carnage, the violation, the dragging away into captivity, the remembrance of former glories, of the gorgeous ceremonies, and the glad festivals, the awful sense of the Divine wrath heightening the present calamities, are successively drawn with all the life and reality of an eye-witness. They combine the truth of history with the deepest pathos of poetry.

How solitary doth she sit, the many-peopled city !  
She is become a widow, the great among the Nations ;  
The Queen among the provinces, how is she tributary !

Weeping—weeps she all the night ; the tears are on her cheeks ;  
From among all her lovers, she hath no comforter ;  
Her friends have all dealt treacherously ; they are become her foes.  
i. 1, 2.

The ways of Sion mourn : none come up to her feasts,  
All her gates are desolate ; and her Priests do sigh ;  
Her virgins wail ! herself, she is in bitterness.—i. 4.

He hath plucked up his garden-hedge, He hath destroyed His Temple ;  
Jehovah hath forgotten made the solemn feast and Sabbath ;  
And in the heat of ire He hath rejected King and Priest.

The Lord his altar hath disdained, abhorred his Holy place,  
And to the adversary's hand given up his palace walls ;  
Our foes shout in Jehovah's house as on a festal day.—ii. 7, 8.

Her gates are sunk into the earth, he hath broke through her bars ;  
Her Monarch and her Princes all are now among the Heathen ;  
The Law hath ceased ; the Prophets find no vision from Jehovah.  
ii. 10.

My eyes do fail with tears, and troubled are my bowels,  
My heart's blood gushes on the earth, for the daughter of my people ;  
Children and suckling babes lie swooning in the squares—

They say unto their mothers, where is corn and wine ?  
They swoon as they were wounded, in the city squares ;  
While glides the soul away into their Mother's bosom.  
ii. 11, 12.

Even dragons, with their breasts drawn out, give suck unto their young ;  
But cruel is my people's daughter, as the Ostrich in the desert ;  
The tongues of sucking infants to their palates cleave with thirst.

Young children ask for bread, and no man breaks it for them ;  
Those that fed on dainties are desolate in the streets ;  
Those brought up in scarlet, even those embrace the dunghill.

iv. 3, 4, 5.

Behold, Jehovah, think with whom thou e'er hast dealt thus !  
Have women ever eat their young, babes fondled in their hands ?  
Have Priest and Prophet e'er been slain in the Lord's Holy place ?

In the streets, upon the ground, lie slain the young and old ;  
My virgins and my youth have fallen by the sword ;  
In thy wrath thou'st slain them, thou hast had no mercy.

Thou hast summoned all my terrors, as to a solemn feast ;  
None 'scaped, and none was left in Jehovah's day of wrath ;  
All that mine arms have borne and nursed, the enemy hath slain.

ii. 20, 1, 2.

Remember, Lord, what hath befallen,  
Look down on our reproach.  
Our heritage is given to strangers,  
Our home to foreigners.  
Our water have we drank for money,  
Our fuel hath its price.—v. 1, 2, 3.

We stretch our hands to Egypt,  
To Assyria for our bread.  
At our life's risk we gain our food,  
From the sword of desert robbers.  
Our skins are like an oven, parched,  
By the fierce heat of famine.  
Matrons in Sion have they ravished,  
Virgins in Judah's cities.

Princes were hung up by the hand,  
And age had no respect.  
Young men are grinding at the mill,  
Boys faint 'neath loads of wood.  
The elders from the gate have ceased,  
The young men from their music.  
The crown is fallen from our head,  
Woe ! woe ! that we have sinned.  
'Tis therefore that our hearts are faint,  
Therefore our eyes are dim,  
For Sion's mountain desolate,  
The foxes walk on it.

The miserable remnant of the people were placed under the command of Gedaliah, as a pasha of the great Assyrian monarch ; the seat of government was fixed at Mizpeh. Yet ambition could look with envy even on this eminence. Gedaliah was assassinated by Ishmael, a man of royal blood. Johanan attempted to revenge his death. Ishmael, discomfited, took refuge with the Ammonites, but Johanan and the rest of the Jews, apprehensive lest they should be called in question for the murder of Gedaliah, fled to Egypt, and carried Jeremiah with them. There the prophet died ; either, according to conflicting traditions, put to death by the Jews, or by king Hophra.

Thus closes the first period of the Jewish History ; and, in the ordinary course of human events, we might expect, the national existence of the Israelitish race. The common occupancy of their native soil seems, in general, the only tie, that permanently unites the various families and tribes, which constitute a nation. As long as that bond



endures, a people may be sunk to the lowest state of degradation ; they may be reduced to a slave-caste under the oppression of foreign invaders ; yet favourable circumstances may again develop the latent germ of a free and united nation : they may rise again to power and greatness, as well as to independence. But, when that bond is severed, nationality usually becomes extinct. A people, transported from their native country, if scattered in small numbers, gradually melt away, and are absorbed in the surrounding tribes : if settled in large masses, remote from each other, they grow up into distinct commonwealths ; but in a generation or two the principle of separation, which is perpetually at work, effectually obliterates all community of interest or feeling. If a traditionary remembrance of their common origin survives, it is accompanied by none of the attachment of kindred ; there is no family pride or affection ; there is no *blood* between the scattered descendants of common ancestors. For time gradually loosens all other ties ; habits of life change ; laws are modified by the circumstances of the state and people ; religion, at least in all polytheistic nations, is not exempt from the influence of the great innovator. The separate communities have outgrown the common objects of national pride ; the memorable events of their history during the time that they dwelt together, their common traditions, the fame of their heroes, the songs of their poets, are superseded by more recent names and occurrences ; each has his new stock of reminiscences, in which their former kindred cannot participate. Even their languages have diverged

from each other; they are not of one speech, they have either entirely or partially ceased to be mutually intelligible. If, in short, they meet again, there is a remote family likeness, but they are strangers in all that connects man with man, or tribe with tribe.

One nation alone seems entirely exempt from this universal law. During the Babylonian captivity, as in the longer dispersion under which they have been for ages afflicted, the Jews still remained a separate people. However widely divided from their native country, they were still Jews; however remote from each other, they were still brethren. What then were the bonds by which Divine Providence held together this single people? What were the principles of their unextinguishable nationality? Their law and their religion; their law, of the irreversible perpetuity of which they were stedfastly convinced, and to which at length they adhered too long and too pertinaciously: their religion, which however it might admit of modifications, in its main principles remained unalterable.

Under the influence of these principles, we shall hereafter see the Jewish people resuming their place among the nations of the earth, and opening a new and extraordinary career, to end even in a more awful dissolution.

END OF VOL. I.











